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HISTORY of WAR

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PLUS

Burgundy wars
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FUTURE
ISSUE 083

KING & COUNTRY
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Fallschirmjäger

GERMANY'S AIRBORNE SOLDIERS, or *Fallschirmjager*, began in the 1930's as the Luftwaffe's elite force trained in special warfare tactics that set them apart and, quite literally, above the rest of the Wehrmacht.

Landing suddenly and with no warning on the battlefield by parachute or troop-carrying gliders, these men could attack and capture specific objectives and hold them until relieved by other advancing ground troops.

In the early part of WW2 *Fallschirmjager* units played a vital role in the Wehrmacht's successful campaigns in *Poland, Denmark, Norway* and the assault on *Belgium, Holland and Greece.*

'OPERATION MERKUR'

The attack on ***Crete*** in May 1941 marks the single most defining action of the *Fallschirmjager* during WW2. It was also to be their last major airborne operation.

Although successful, Hitler himself was shocked by the extent of their losses and ordered that never again would they be employed in a mass formation…

Instead the *FJ*, were to used as elite infantry and only for *'Special Operations'!*

MUSSOLINI'S RESCUE

Probably the most dramatic of these *'Special Operations'* was the rescue of deposed Italian dictator ***Benito Mussolini*** from imprisonment in a resort hotel on the *Gran Sasso Plateau* in the Apennine Mountains in September 1943.

On this page you can see the full range of KING & COUNTRY'S *Fallschirmjagers* in action.

Most are dressed in the *'tropical'* version of the *FJ* uniform and carry an assortment of weapons. The exceptions are ***SS-Hauptsturmfuhrer Otto Skorzeny,*** who led the Mussolini rescue and the dark-coated, deposed ***'Il Duce'*** himself, part of a 4-figure set.

All of the other paratroops are available as *'single figures'*. Put them all together and you can tell a small, exciting part of a very big story about one of WW2's most famous fighting formations.

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The iconic recruiting poster, featuring Field Marshal Lord Kitchener

Welcome

At the outbreak of the First World War, the British Empire stretched across the world, but its standing armies were small, suited to small colonial operations and garrison duties. After the outbreak of war in 1914, the British High Command quickly recognised the need for a huge recruitment drive, calling upon thousands of civilians to join the ranks. Lord Kitchener soon became the face of this patriotic call to arms, resulting in the new volunteer forces being dubbed 'Kitchener's Army'. These civilians turned soldiers soon found themselves on the front line of a new and devastating kind of war that would change the course of history.

Tim Williamson
Editor-in-Chief

CONTRIBUTORS

TOM GARNER
2020 has marked the 38th anniversary of the Falklands War, and this issue Tom spoke with retired veteran Major Mike Seear, who served in the 7th (DoE's Own) Gurkha Rifles at the Battle of Tumbledown (p. 32).

PETER DOYLE
Peter is a widely published military historian and expert in military terrain, battlefield archaeology, and the First World War. On page 22 he discusses common myths surrounding the origins of Kichener's Army.

WILLIAM WELSH
This month William takes a look at how Stephen 'the Great' of Moldavia earned his prestigious reputation. Along with his ally Vlad III Dracula, Stephen became renowned in Europe for his resistance to the Ottomans (p. 56).

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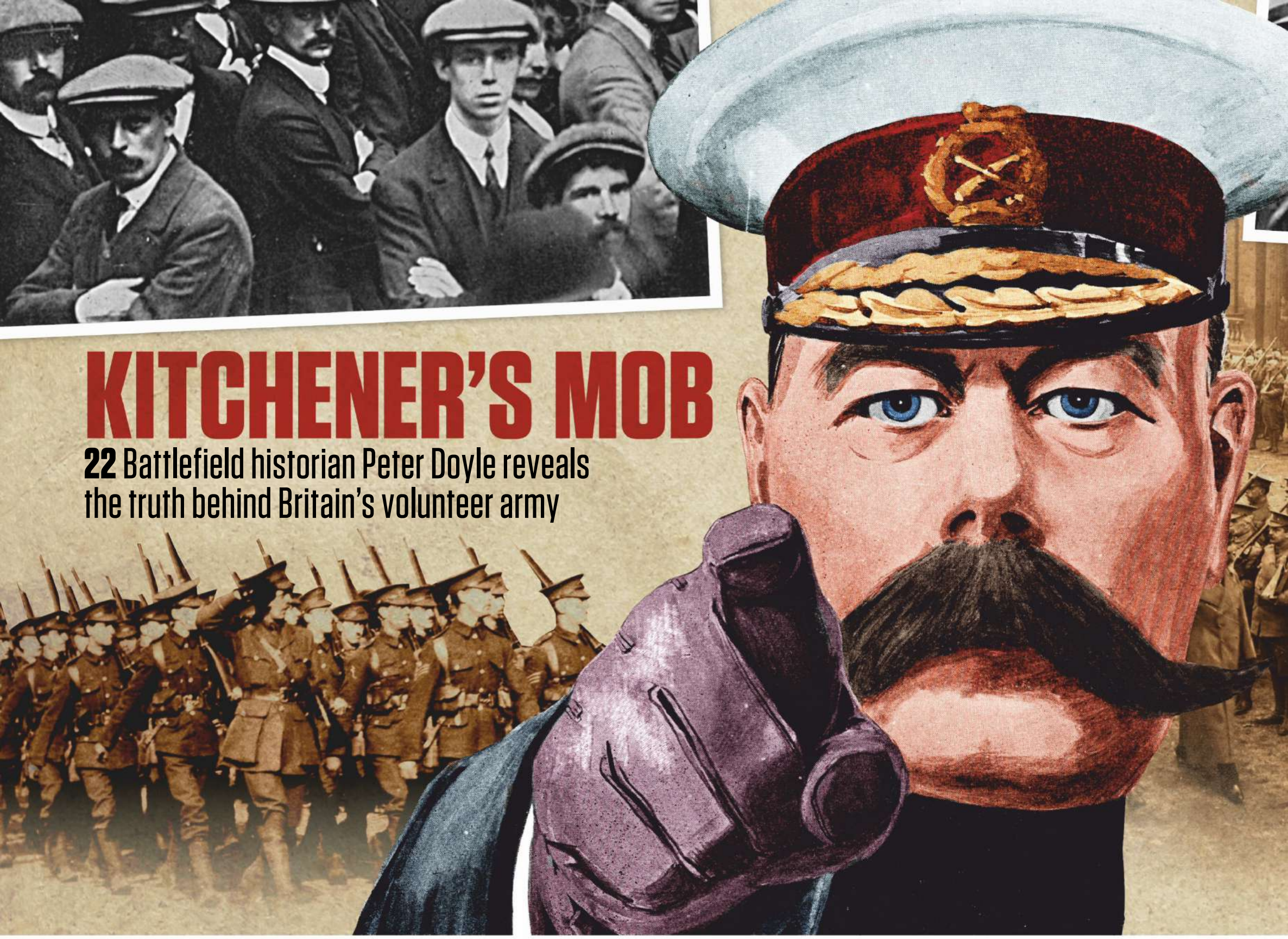

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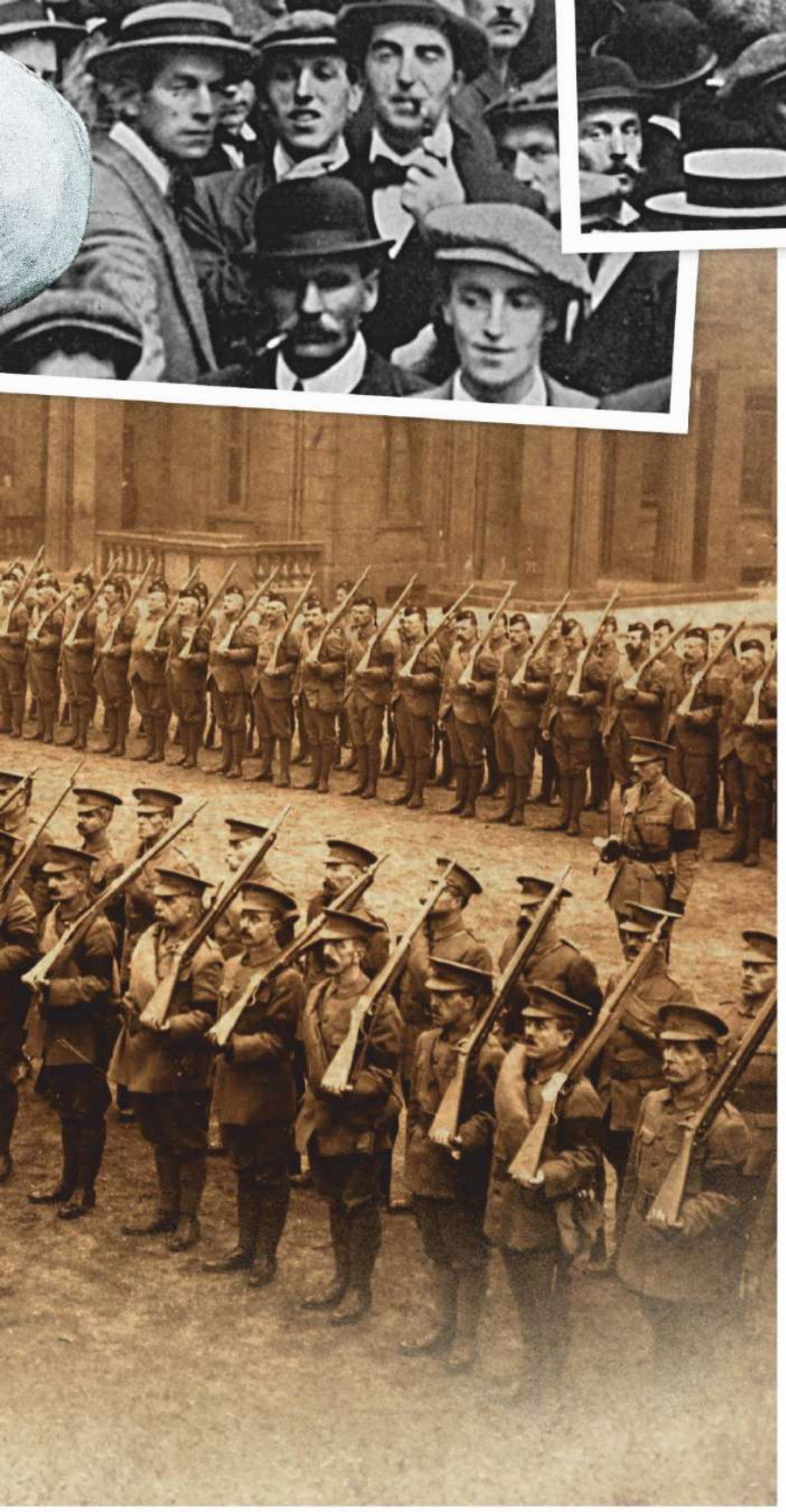

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Inside the US helicopter used in special operations and combat zones around the world

WAR in FOCUS

IN THE FIRING LINE

Taken: c. 1965

US soldiers leave a burning village, during the Vietnam War. Before the Battle of Ia Drang in 1965, US troops were unable to pin down the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) or elusive Viet Cong in a pitched battle. Instead, the Americans targetted villages suspected of sheltering the Viet Cong, resulting in the destruction of property, as well as horrific atrocities.

© Getty

WAR in FOCUS

GAS MASKS FOR BEGINNERS

Taken: c. 1930s

Even before the outbreak of the Second World War, the British Government feared the threat of gas attacks on the civilian population. Here, children are wearing respirators which feature a large metal filter, located in the attached satchel. During the war this larger design of mask was used by service personnel and a more compact mask was handed out to the public.

© Getty

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WAR in FOCUS

REMINGTON AMMUNITION

Taken: c. 1940s

A worker inspects boxes of ammuntion at the Remington Arms Company's factory in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Remington is one of the world's oldest firearms companies, dating back to 1816, and produced the iconic M1903 Springfield service rifle, which remained in use by the US military throughout the first half of the 20th century.

TIMELINE OF...

BURGUNDY'S WARS

In a quest to enlarge their territories and establish an independent kingdom, Burgundian dukes wreak havoc in France, subjugate the Low Countries and fall foul of the Swiss

CABOCHIEN REVOLT 01

Pro-Burgundian Parisian rebels called 'Cabochiens' rampage through Paris and assault Armagnacs and their property. The Bastille and the royal residence at Hôtel Saint-Pol are stormed and the revolt continues for four months. The disruption allows the English to pursue their ambitions in France. Burgundy remains neutral while the largely Armagnac French army is destroyed at the Battle of Agincourt in 1415.

Cabochien rebels massacre Parisian Armagnacs regardless of gender while looting the city

1384 — 23 November 1407-21 September 1435 — 27 April-28 August 1413 — 10 September 1419

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE BURGUNDIAN STATE

Descended from the youngest son of King John II of France, the Valois dukes of Burgundy are vassals of the French monarch. When Duke Philip the Bold marries the countess of Flanders in 1384, Burgundian territory vastly increases. The duchy's influence increases to rival the French monarchy.

The marriage of Philip the Bold to Margaret III, Countess of Flanders, is a diplomatic coup for Burgundy

ARMAGNAC-BURGUNDIAN CIVIL WAR

The 'Armagnacs' (led by Louis I, Duke of Orléans) and Burgundians are rival cadet branches of the French royal family that vie for power during the mental incapacity of King Charles VI. Orléans is murdered on the orders of Duke John the Fearless of Burgundy. A vicious civil war is unleashed, which weakens France during the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453).

Louis, Duke of Orléans is assassinated in Paris in November 1407 while en route to meet Charles VI. His hand is cut off while his skull is split by an axe

ASSASSINATION OF JOHN THE FEARLESS 02

The English conquest of Normandy during 1417-19 prompts Duke John and the pro-Armagnac Dauphin Charles (the future Charles VII of France) to agree to settle their differences. At a meeting at Montereau, John is murdered by Armagnacs on a bridge in the presence of Charles. The civil war intensifies with catastrophic consequences for France.

In 1521, King Francis I of France is presented with the wounded skull of John the Fearless by a monk who said, "Sire, this is the hole through which the English entered France"

18+

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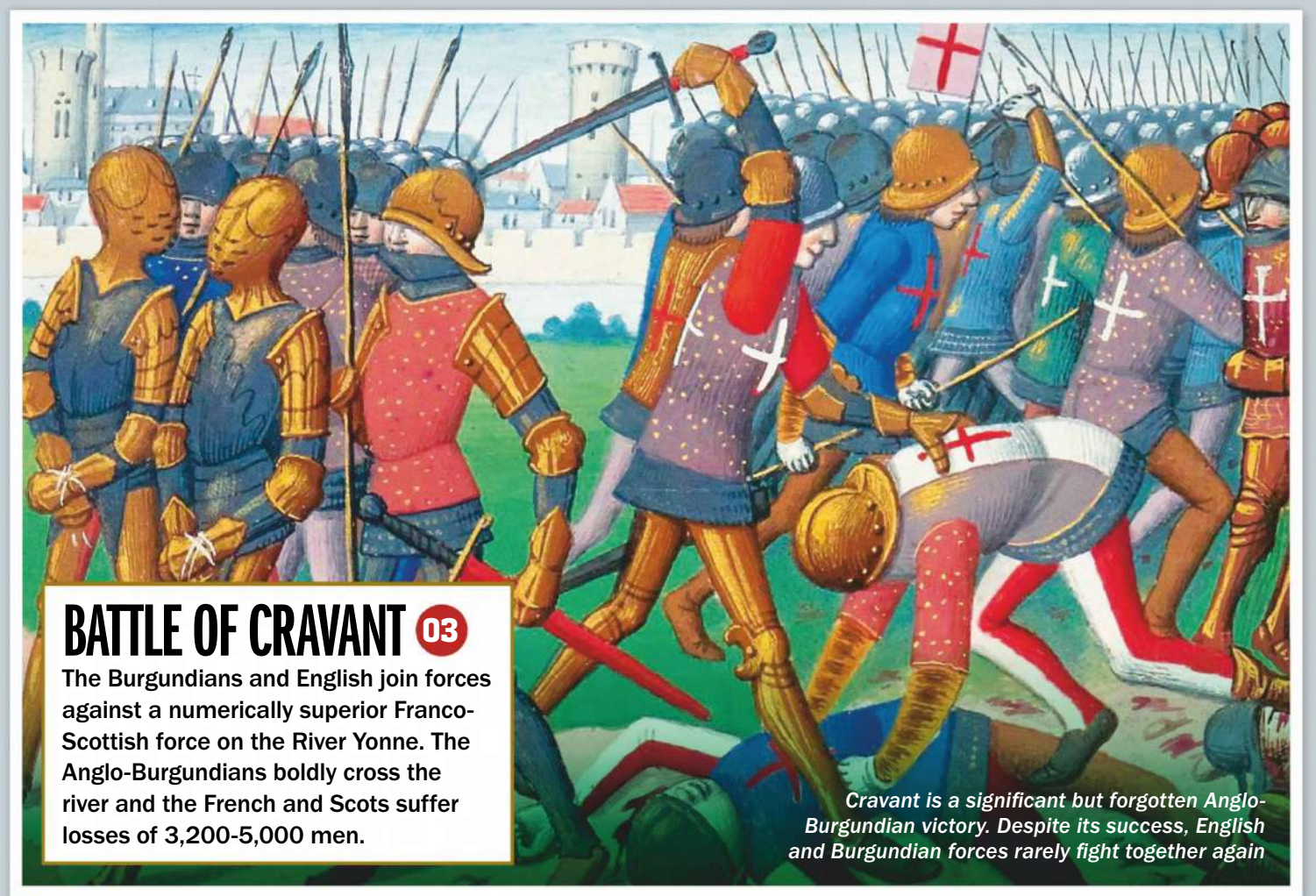


BATTLE OF CRAVANT 03

The Burgundians and English join forces against a numerically superior Franco-Scottish force on the River Yonne. The Anglo-Burgundians boldly cross the river and the French and Scots suffer losses of 3,200-5,000 men.

Cravant is a significant but forgotten Anglo-Burgundian victory. Despite its success, English and Burgundian forces rarely fight together again

DEFYING JOAN OF ARC 04

A pro-Burgundian garrison repels Joan of Arc's forces at the Siege of Paris in 1429. This is Joan's first major setback and Burgundian soldiers later capture her at the Siege of Compiègne. She is sold to the English and subsequently tried and executed by a pro-Burgundian ecclesiastical court.

Joan of Arc's capture by the Burgundians is memorialised in a mural at the Panthéon in Paris

21 May 1420, 13 April 1423 — **31 July 1423** — **September 1429-May 1430** — **1435-36**

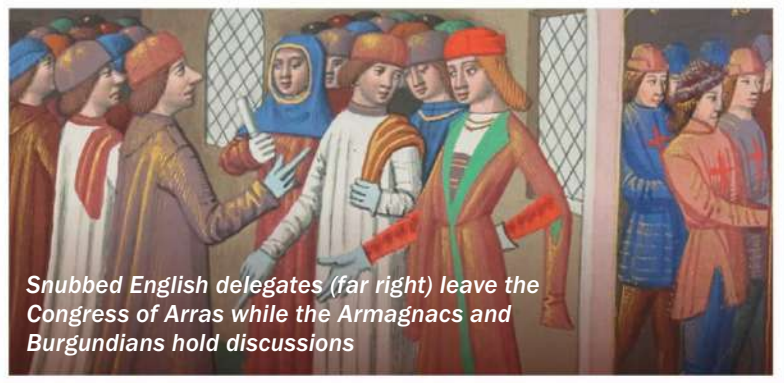
Burgundian support for the Treaty of Troyes enables Henry V to become the heir to the French throne and forces Charles VI to disinherit his own son

TREATIES OF TROYES AND AMIENS

Under their new duke – Philip the Good – the Burgundians officially defect to the English. They first swear allegiance to Henry V at Troyes and then his infant successor Henry VI at Amiens. Their support cements a dual monarchy of England and France with Burgundy providing military support against the Dauphin's Armagnac supporters.

RECONCILIATION WITH FRANCE

Philip the Good makes peace with the now crowned Charles VII at the Treaty of Arras, which ends the Armagnac-Burgundian Civil War. In a volte-face, he also declares war on England and commands a failed siege against English-held Calais. Burgundian attention then gradually moves away from French affairs.



Snubbed English delegates (far right) leave the Congress of Arras while the Armagnacs and Burgundians hold discussions

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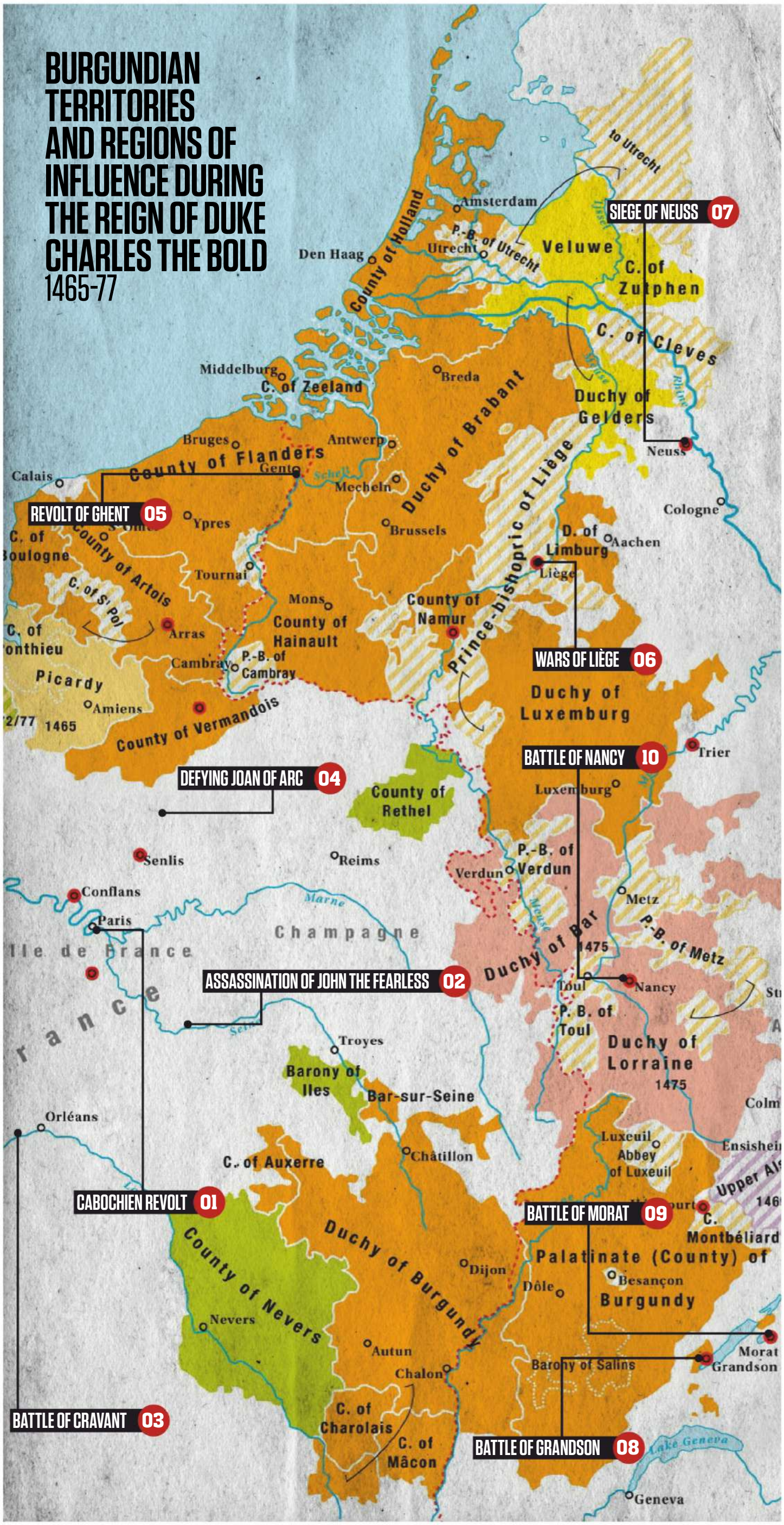
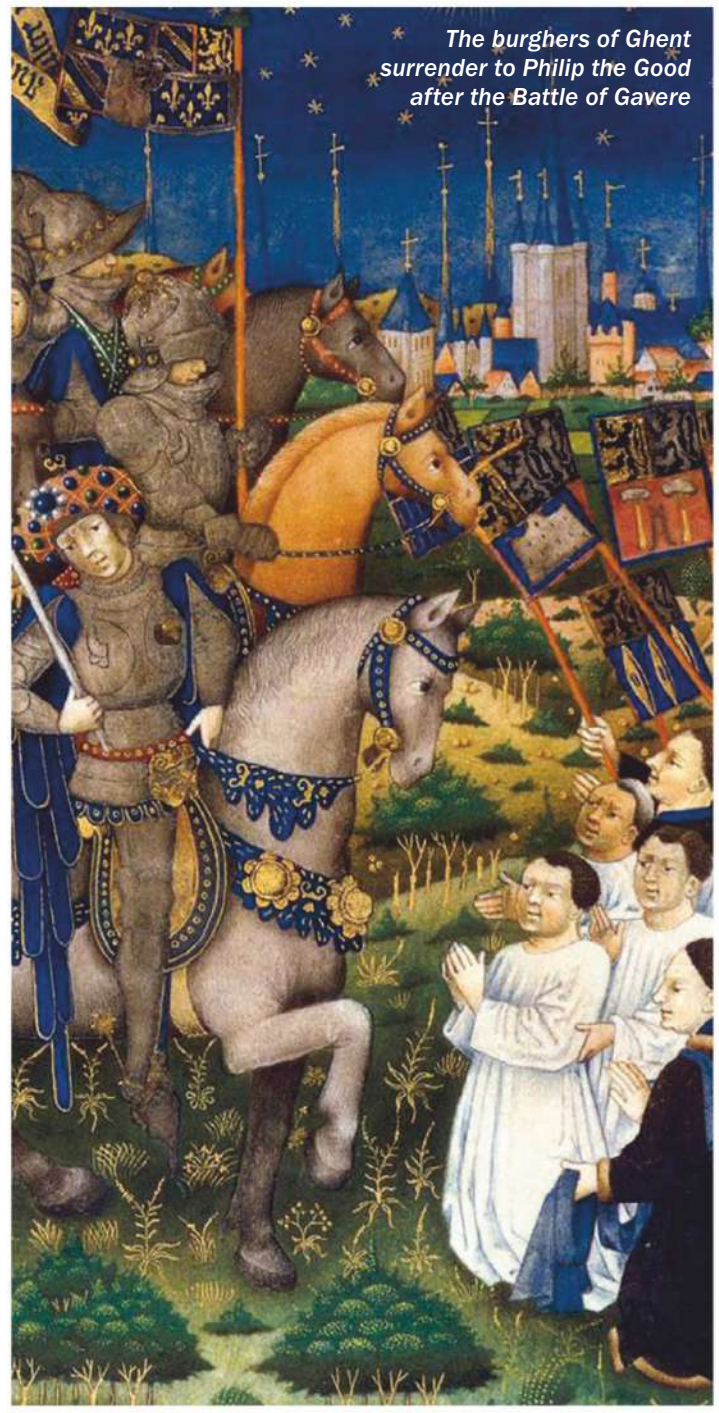
BURGUNDIAN TERRITORIES AND REGIONS OF INFLUENCE DURING THE REIGN OF DUKE CHARLES THE BOLD 1465-77



REVOLT OF GHENT 05

The Flemish city of Ghent rebels against Burgundy for their imposition of new taxes. Guilds arm themselves and set up a peoples' assembly, which prompts Duke Philip to declare war. Several bloody sieges and battles ensue across Flanders, which results in a decisive Burgundian victory at Gavere.



The burghers of Ghent surrender to Philip the Good after the Battle of Gavere

1449-53

1465-68

WARS OF LIÈGE 06

The Burgundians attempt to expand their influence in the Prince-Bishopric of Liège. This results in three wars of rebellion when the citizens refuse to accept Burgundian rule. Duke Charles the Bold bloodily suppresses these revolts by eventually sacking Liège in 1468.

A 19th century depiction of the sack of Liège

The Siege of Neuss as depicted in a 15th Century German chronicle

SIEGE OF NEUSS 07

Before he fights the Swiss, Duke Charles marches into the Rhine valley and besieges Neuss in the Holy Roman Empire. Despite military support from German nobles and English mercenaries, Burgundian assaults are repulsed. When Imperial forces march on the city, the siege is abandoned.

BATTLE OF MORAT 09

The bloodiest battle of the Burgundian Wars, Morat sees Charles besieging a lakeside town while progressing to Bern. The Swiss attack from woods in close formations and overwhelm the Burgundians who become trapped. Charles's men suffer casualties of 6,000-10,000 men compared to just 410 Swiss.

Charles the Bold flees Morat

BATTLE OF NANCY 10

Charles escapes from Morat and besieges Nancy, a former Burgundian city that has been lost to the Duchy of Lorraine. The duke of Lorraine attacks with a substantial force of Swiss mercenaries and the Burgundians are annihilated. Charles is killed by a Swiss halberdier, which effectively ends the Burgundian state. Burgundy and its territories are divided between France and the Habsburg Holy Roman Empire.

Nancy enhances the reputation of Swiss martial prowess and ends the Burgundian dream of national independence and glory

29 July 1474-27 June 1475: 1474-77

22 June 1476 2 March 1476

5 January 1477

BURGUNDIAN WARS

The ambitious Charles the Bold dreams of ruling a territorially continuous and independent kingdom on the lines of the Early Medieval states of Lotharingia and Burgundy. This includes territory from the Netherlands and Switzerland. Charles buys German territory from the Austrians before attempting to expand his lands by fighting the Swiss Confederacy.

By the 1470s, the Duchy of Burgundy has one of the richest courts in Europe. Charles the Bold and his predecessors are sometimes called 'The Grand Dukes of the West'

© Getty

BATTLE OF GRANDSON 08

Charles has a formidable standing army and besieges Grandson Castle in western Switzerland. The Swiss garrison is controversially executed after they surrender, which prompts a Swiss relief force to launch a surprise attack. Charles mishandles the battle and suffers a humiliating defeat.

The Swiss capture much of the Burgundian booty including artillery and valuable items like jewellery and gold and silver plate

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THE GOOD, THE BOLD AND THE FEARLESS

The Burgundian dukes equally pursued politics and brute force in their quest for an independent state

CHARLES 'THE BOLD'

AN AMBITIOUS LEADER, WHOSE REIGN SAW THE FINAL HOPE FOR BURGUNDIAN INDEPENDENCE 1433-1477

As the son and heir of Duke Philip the Good, Charles was thrust into the centre of the Franco-Burgundian conflict from an early age. In 1440, he was married to Catherine, Princess of France, as part of a peace treaty with Charles VII, though she fell ill and died just six years later.

Charles was raised with an education fitting for a European prince, spending time in martial pursuits as well as with scholarly study. He was also a member of his father's Order of the Golden Fleece, though certain actions in later life would prove less than chivalric.

He was a one-time companion of the future Louis XI of France, while the prince was exiled at the Burgundian court. However, this relationship quickly succumbed to the two men's dynastic destinies, after Louis ascended the throne in 1461. While still count of Charlolais, by 1465 Charles became de facto ruler of the duchy, effortlessly wresting control from his then ailing father.

As the head of the duchy, Charles spared no time launching his own attack against the French crown. He was one of the chief instigators of the League of the Public Weal, an alliance of French nobility that opposed Louis's rule. During this conflict, Charles was badly wounded at the Battle of Montlhéry (16 July 1465), which ended inconclusively, though the following year peace negotiations restored territory to Burgundy, including towns along the Somme.

After the death of his father in 1467, Charles became the Fourth Duke of Burgundy, and continued his campaigns against France, while also putting down several internal revolts. In 1471 he married Margaret of York, sister of King Edward IV – thereby allying himself with France's great rival. His expansive ambition for Burgundy continued to clash with France throughout his reign, resulting in a costly and fruitless invasion as far as Rouen in 1472. This would be Charles's last significant offensive into French territory, but he would continue fighting to expand Burgundian power in the Upper Rhine, Alsace and Lorraine.

Charles the Bold, depicted by the 17th century artist Peter Paul Rubens

DUKE JOHN 'THE FEARLESS'

HIS BRIEF BUT EVENTFUL CHAPTER IN THE DUCHY'S HISTORY SAW THE OUTBREAK OF OPEN WAR WITH BURGUNDY'S RIVALS 1371-1419

No sooner had John become the Second Duke of Burgundy, he began plans to further control the French crown. Named 'the Fearless' for his conduct during the 1396 Crusade against the Ottomans, during which he was captured, John was 33 when he inherited the duchy from his father.

John's immediate rival at the French court was Louis, Duke of Orleans, the younger brother of King Charles VI. With the king intermittently ill, and mentally unstable, the two dukes vied for control of the government, as well as the king's heir, the dauphin. In November 1407, Louis was stabbed to death in Paris on John's orders, sparking open hostilities between the Burgundians and the new Duke of Orleans, Charles, and his ally the Count of Armagnac. This conflict caused a huge rift within the French nobility, causing animosity interspersed with open violence for decades. During Henry V's invasion in 1415, John found himself unable to reach the battle at Agincourt, during which many of his rivals were killed or captured. However this did not settle the dispute, and John found himself exiled from Paris for several years, only returning in 1418 during a bloody coup. While attending a meeting to discuss peace terms with the dauphin (the future Charles VII), John himself was himself assassinated by Armagnac supporters.

***Left:** John II, Duke of Burgundy was assassinated by Armagnac supporters*

DUKE PHILIP 'THE GOOD'

THE 'GRAND DUKE OF THE WEST' WHO FORGED FOR HIMSELF AN EXPANSIVE REALM AND THE COURT TRAPPINGS OF ROYALTY 1396-1467

Discouraged from involving himself in French politics as directly as his ill-fated father had done, Philip began his reign by securing an alliance with England in the Treaty of Troyes, which also sealed English succession to the French throne. This alliance was supported with the marriage of Philip's sister Anne to Henry V's brother, John Duke of Bedford.

***Left:** Philip wearing the collar of the Order of the Golden Fleece, the chivalric order he founded in 1430*

Though he provided some military support for the English crown's campaigns against Charles VI's son, Philip's primary focus lay with securing and expanding Burgundy's Flemish and Dutch possessions. By the 1430s he had swept up the counties of Hainault, Zeeland and Holland, as well as the duchy of Brabant and later Luxembourg.

Once the alliance with England proved too costly to Philip, in 1435 he signed the Treaty of Arras, making peace with Charles VII and abandoning Henry VI. Philip even made a strike against his former ally, in an unsuccessful attack on Calais in 1436. Despite this failure, and facing several significant internal uprisings in Flanders, Philip's reign saw the height of Burgundy as a European power, and earned his self-appointed title 'Grand Duke of the West'.

DUKE PHILIP 'THE BOLD'

A YOUNG WARRIOR WHO BECAME A SLY POLITICIAN, HE CONSOLIDATED BURGUNDY INTO A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH IN EUROPE 1342-1404

The fourth son of King John II of France, Philip was just 14 years old when he fought at the Battle of Poitiers (1356), for which actions he earned the moniker 'the Bold'. The battle was a disaster for the French crown, resulting in Philip becoming a hostage in England along with his father, where they remained for four years. Before his death in 1364, the king made Philip the Duke of Burgundy, and in 1369 he was married to the daughter and heiress of the Count of Flanders, Margaret. In 1384 the couple inherited the counties of Flanders and other territories, placing them under Philip's control. At the time, Philip was acting as regent for his young nephew Charles VI, who had inherited the throne aged just 11. Responsibilities in Paris caused Philip to be largely absent from his territories in Flanders and Burgundy, which he governed from his residences in the capital. Through his prominent position at the French court, Philip was able to direct funds – either through nefarious or legal means – to his territories, building Burgundy up to be a powerful entity upon his death in 1404.

***Left:** Philip II was responsible for building Burgundy as a powerful state, causing confrontations for subsequent generations*

***Below:** King John II of France at the Battle of Poitiers*

All images: Wiki / PD / CC

The battle depicted in the Zürcher Schilling, a chronicle written in Bern by Diebold Schilling in the early 1480s

Source: Wiki / PD

MORAT 1476

Charles the Bold was defeated by the Swiss in a battle that doomed the Burgundian State

The Burgundian Wars should have been the zenith of the rise of Burgundy to becoming a fully independent state. In less than 100 years, Burgundian dukes had increased their power to such an extent that by the early 1470s, Burgundy had become a strong force between the Kingdom of France and the Habsburg Holy Roman Empire. Not content with ruling vast tracts of lands in the Low Countries and what is now France and Germany, Duke Charles the Bold (r. 1467-77) sought to expand his influence southwards along the River Rhine. In doing so, he came into conflict with the Holy Roman Empire but failed to successfully besiege Neuss.

Sigismund, the Habsburg Archduke of Austria, subsequently formed an anti-Burgundian league with the Swiss Confederacy in 1474. The confederacy consisted of small, independent cantons that formed the nucleus of modern Switzerland and together with the Austrians they conquered a part of Burgundian Franche-Comté. Charles retaliated by marching on the western Swiss canton of Vaud but he was heavily defeated at the Battle of Grandson on 2 March 1476.

Charles was forced to flee the battlefield and lost much of his artillery, supplies and treasure. Nevertheless, he stayed in Switzerland and reorganised his army at Lausanne with a plan to march on Bern, which was the most powerful Swiss canton. Despite his earlier defeat, Charles commanded a highly organised standing army of professional soldiers. It was also technologically superior and contained the best field and siege artillery in Europe. Charles used these explosive assets to protect his soldiers when the Burgundians besieged their first objective on the march to Bern at Morat. Located on the eastern shore of Lake Morat in the canton of Fribourg, Morat (known in German as 'Murten') was only 30 miles from Bern and Charles hoped to provoke the Swiss into attacking him.

Numbering approximately 20,000 men, the Burgundians constructed a defensive line of field fortifications that were protected by artillery but there were flaws in Charles's army. His force was a mixture of infantry, cavalry and archers but many of his men were foreign mercenaries. This included soldiers from Italy and Savoy as well as 900 English archers. Coordinating these multilingual forces had already proved problematic and Charles was also forced to use older cannons to replace the modern guns that were lost at Grandson. In addition, Charles split some of his army from the fortifications and neglected the threat from both limited withdrawal routes on his right flank as well as a nearby forest. The Swiss used the wooded area as cover to rapidly advance on the Burgundians on 22 June 1476.

Supported by cavalry provided by their ally Duke René II of Lorraine, the Swiss marched in a dense formation of 20,000 pikemen and halberdiers. Their advance headed straight for the Burgundian defences, which surprised Charles's men and forced them to rush to get into battle formation. This proved difficult as the Burgundians had largely returned to their camps, which left the fortifications outside Morat without a significant force of defenders.

"A ROUT ENSUED WHEN CHARLES ORDERED A RETREAT DOWN THE CONSTRICTED ESCAPE ROUTES"

The Swiss infantrymen broke through Charles's defences and advanced on the Burgundian camp in several waves. Their pikes and halberds proved to be superior weapons against the Burgundian cavalry and even the artillery, which was slow to load. Once the battle reached the camp, Charles tried to organise its defence but these counter-attacks failed to break the tight formations of the Swiss.

Panic now set in among the Burgundians and a rout ensued when Charles ordered a retreat down the constricted escape routes. The pursuing Swiss and soldiers from Lorraine gave no quarter and the battle turned into a massacre. Charles escaped but it is estimated that 10,000-12,000 of his troops were killed compared to only 400 Swiss.

The Burgundians never recovered from their defeat at Morat and it was the beginning of the end of Charles's expansionist ambitions. Like at Grandson, more of his treasure was captured as booty and he was forced to escape to Pontarlier near to what is now the Franco-Swiss border. Within six months, the skilful Swiss returned the favour to Lorraine at the Battle of Nancy in January 1477. A Swiss halberdier killed Charles and with him died the dream of an independent Burgundy.

BURGUNDY'S ENGLISHMEN

CHARLES THE BOLD EMPLOYED THOUSANDS OF SKILLED ENGLISH ARCHERS TO SWELL THE RANKS OF HIS PROFESSIONAL ARMY

England and Burgundy had formed a powerful alliance during the latter part of the Hundred Years' War. Although the alliance ended in 1435, English soldiers continued to serve in Burgundian armies as mercenaries. Charles the Bold employed large numbers of English archers from 1467 and paid them double the amount of the English Crown for their service. Around 2,000 joined the Burgundians following Edward IV's aborted invasion of France in 1475. Charles referenced the Wars of the Roses when he said that the archers "might as well stay and fight the French as [they] massacre each other in England".

These Englishmen served Charles well during the subsequent Burgundian Wars despite the duke's defeats. Their archery skills were praised by one chronicler who wrote, "Their arrows flew as thick as the snow was falling." At Morat, the archers tried to delay the advancing Swiss with their famous tactic of using defensive sharpened stakes. This attempt failed because they were numerically outnumbered but the survivors and other recruits continued to serve Charles. At his catastrophic defeat at Nancy 1477, which resulted in his death, the duke's army consisted of least ten companies of English archers. These numbered approximately 100 men each but they were destroyed along with the rest of Charles's army.

This 19th century depiction of English archers during Edward IV's reign has several inaccuracies, particularly in terms of clothing and helmets

© Alamy

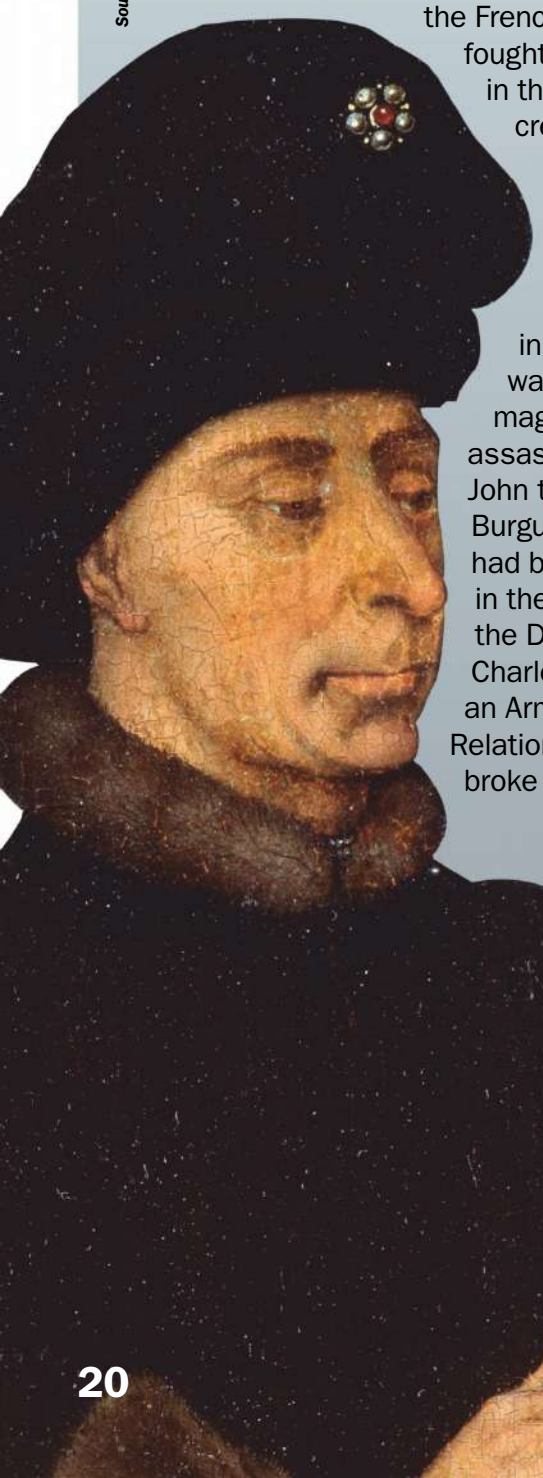
DIVIDED LOYALTY

Burgundy was the vital third player during the Hundred Years' War whose unlikely alliance with England inflicted humiliating defeats on Armagnac France and destroyed Joan of Arc

The Hundred Years' War is traditionally characterised as a relatively straightforward conflict between rival kings of England and France. The war in fact lasted for 116 years during 1337-1453 and its length was immeasurably prolonged by its forgotten third player – Burgundy. In the late Middle Ages, France was the richest kingdom in Christendom with a large geographical size and population. By contrast, England was a small country and should have theoretically never made the dramatic headway that it did in France. By 1422, Henry VI ruled both England and France but his French throne would not have been possible without Burgundian support.

The English profited greatly from a civil war between the Armagnacs and Burgundians. Both sides were cadet branches of the French royal family who fought for hegemony in the power vacuum created by the mental illness of King Charles VI (r.1380-1422). This internal conflict began in 1407 but it was immeasurably magnified by the assassination of Duke John the Fearless of Burgundy in 1419. John had been murdered in the presence of the Dauphin Charles, Charles VI's heir and an Armagnac supporter. Relations irretrievably broke down between the two sides and it was later said that John's battered skull was "the hole through which the English entered France".

Source: Wiki / PD / Art



John the Fearless was a rash, ruthless politician whose machinations against the Armagnacs led to his own demise and set Burgundy on a unscrupulously independent path

"Cut apart and killed"

Henry V of England had already won the Battle of Agincourt and conquered Normandy but he now formed an alliance with the new Burgundian duke, Philip the Good. On 21 May 1420, the Treaty of Troyes was signed where Charles VI named Henry as his heir and disinherited his own son. Clause 29 forcefully demonstrated the extent of Burgundy's strength and bitterness, "In consideration of the frightful and astounding crimes and misdeeds … committed by Charles, the said Dauphin, it is agreed that we, our son [in-law] Henry, and also our very dear son Philip, Duke of Burgundy, will never treat for peace or amity with the said Charles."

Even Henry V's premature death in 1422 just weeks before Charles VI did nothing to deter the Anglo-Burgundian alliance. Troyes was reconfirmed in April 1423 at Amiens on behalf of the infant dual-monarch Henry VI. A few months after Amiens, English and Burgundian troops fought side by side at the Battle of Cravant on 31 July 1423 against an Armagnac-Scottish army. An audacious river attack and the combined use of English longbowmen and Burgundian crossbowmen caused "a large amount of death". This led to the Armagnacs and Scots being "cut apart and killed" with casualties of 3,200-5,000.

The Maid's nemesis

After Cravant, English and Burgundian troops largely operated separately against pro-Dauphin Armagnac forces. This was a prudent move for the numerically inferior English, particularly with regard to the occupation of Paris. The French capital was pro-Burgundian and only a token English garrison was required, which was mostly based in the Bastille. This trust in the pro-Burgundian Parisians bore fruit when Joan of Arc besieged the city.

The 'Maid' had won a series of stunning victories against the English, which culminated in the coronation of the Dauphin as Charles VII at Reims Cathedral on 17 July 1429. She now turned her attention to Paris, which was assaulted during 3-8 September 1429. Her attack did not go to plan when the Parisians put up a spirited defence. A personal sense of the enmity that endured between the Burgundians and Armagnacs was violently displayed when Joan was wounded. Outside the city walls, Joan shouted to the pro-Burgundian garrison, "If you don't surrender before nightfall you will all be killed." A crossbowman shouted back, "Shall we, you bloody tart?" before he shot her through the leg. The stricken Joan was forced to withdraw and the siege was her first real failure.

Although the English were Joan's main foes on paper, it was the Burgundians who were her most active enemies. During her childhood in Lorraine, she had endured raids by local Burgundian bands of soldiers and worse was to come after her defeat at Paris. At the Siege of Compiègne, Joan was captured on 23 May 1430 by Burgundians who sold her to the English. Her trial and execution was also conducted by a pro-Burgundian ecclesiastical court.

The Burgundians had largely decided the fate of Joan but her successes informed how their position developed during the 1430s. Although the English were dependent on Philip's support for their continuing presence in France, Burgundy was never a wholly trustworthy ally. Philip was a wily political operator and the coronation of Charles VII – along with continuing English military setbacks – changed the dynamic of the alliance. Despite their ambitions, the Burgundians were dynastically tied to the Valois monarchy and Philip recognised that the days of English dominance were numbered.

To maintain his own ambitions for territorial gain and increasing independence from France, Philip eventually reconciled with Charles VII at the Treaty of Arras in 1435. The Burgundians abandoned the English and even fought against them by attacking Calais in 1436. In the end, the course of the conflict hinged on which side Burgundy supported. It is highly arguable that the war would have ended much sooner had John the Fearless not been assassinated.

"ALTHOUGH THE ENGLISH WERE JOAN'S MAIN FOES ON PAPER, IT WAS THE BURGUNDIANS WHO WERE HER MOST ACTIVE ENEMIES"

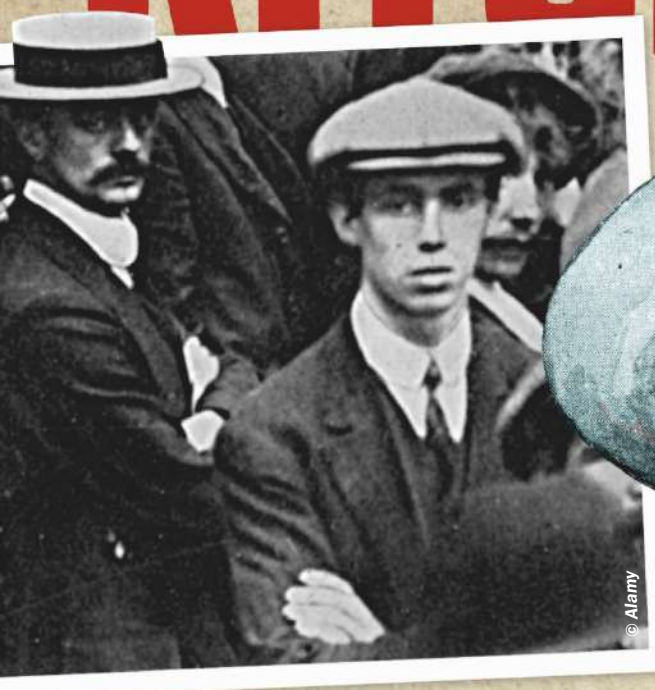
Henry V and Charles VI enter Paris following the Treaty of Troyes, 1420. Burgundian support for Henry was critical in securing the dual monarchy of England and France

© Getty

WHAT HAPPENED TO BRITAIN'S VOLUNTEER ARMY?

KITCHENER'S MOB

WORDS **PETER DOYLE**



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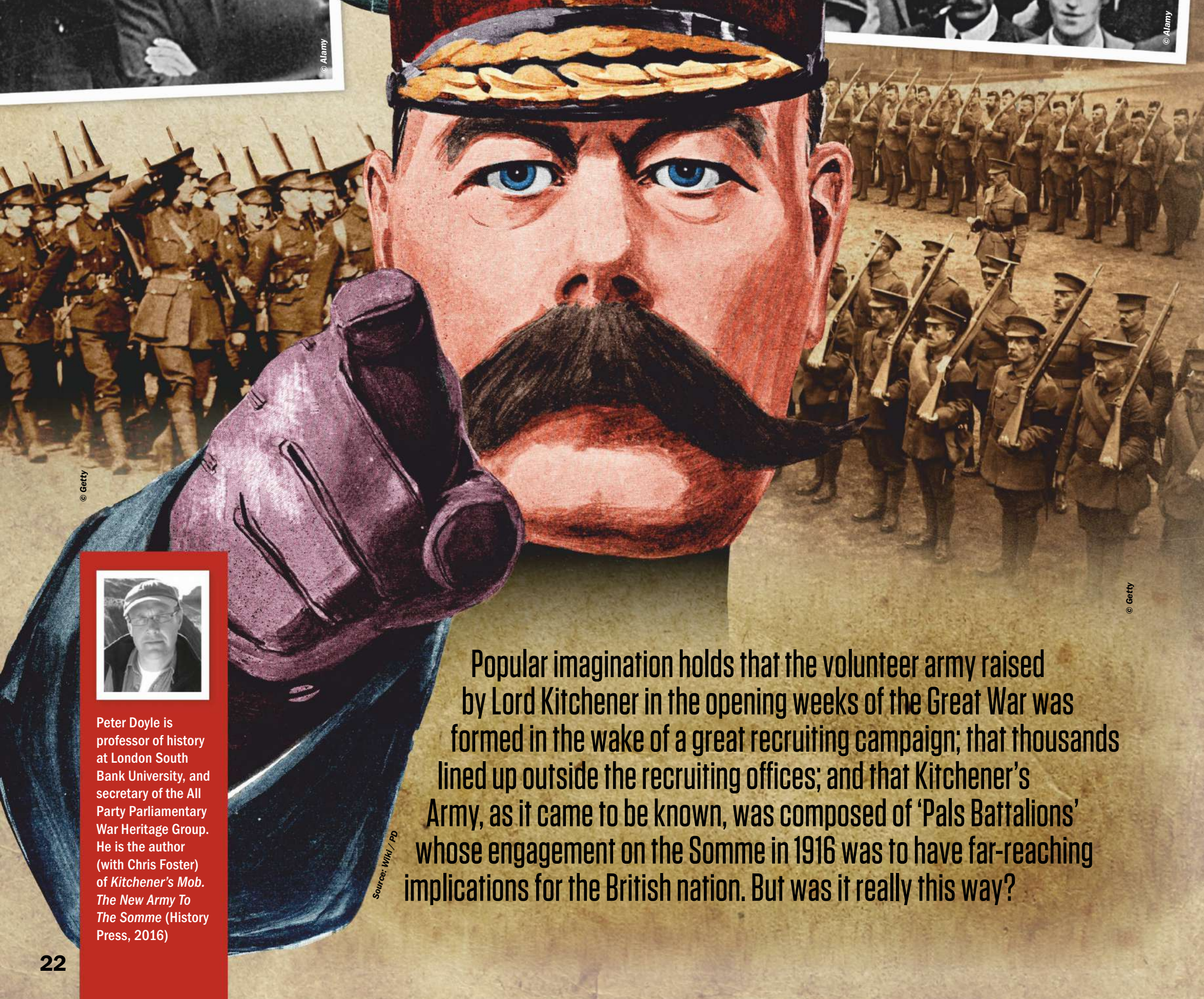

Source: Wiki / PD

Peter Doyle is professor of history at London South Bank University, and secretary of the All Party Parliamentary War Heritage Group. He is the author (with Chris Foster) of *Kitchener's Mob. The New Army To The Somme* (History Press, 2016)

Popular imagination holds that the volunteer army raised by Lord Kitchener in the opening weeks of the Great War was formed in the wake of a great recruiting campaign; that thousands lined up outside the recruiting offices; and that Kitchener's Army, as it came to be known, was composed of 'Pals Battalions' whose engagement on the Somme in 1916 was to have far-reaching implications for the British nation. But was it really this way?

Crowds of volunteers prepare to sign up to join Kitchener's Army

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At the outbreak of war on 4 August 1914, Lord Kitchener was a national hero; it is therefore not surprising that he would be called to his country's service as Secretary of State for War.

The task facing Kitchener was a huge one. With the six regular divisions of the British Expeditionary Force already committed to the Western Front, there was little left in reserve. There were regulars posted across the globe on colonial service, and there were the volunteer Territorial Force battalions whose original destiny had been service at home.

Winston Churchill recorded his impressions of the man who would ultimately shape an army in his name, "In soldierly sentences [he] proclaimed a series of inspiring and prophetic truths. Everyone expected that the war would be short; but wars took unexpected courses, and we must now prepare for a long struggle. Such a conflict could not be ended by sea power alone. It could only be ended only by great battles on the Continent. In these the British Empire must bear its part on a scale proportionate to its magnitude and power. We must be prepared to put armies of millions in the field and maintain them for several years. In no other way could we discharge our duty to our allies or to the world."

Pre-war, there had been a decline in recruitment to the British Army, so to add sufficient men to the ranks to fight the war on the continent, there would need to be a significant 'step up' in recruiting men.

"WE MUST BE PREPARED TO PUT ARMIES OF MILLIONS IN THE FIELD AND MAINTAIN THEM FOR SEVERAL YEARS. IN NO OTHER WAY COULD WE DISCHARGE OUR DUTY TO OUR ALLIES OR TO THE WORLD"

Kitchener's approach was clear. He would bypass the part-time territorials and create new battalions of 1,000 men each.

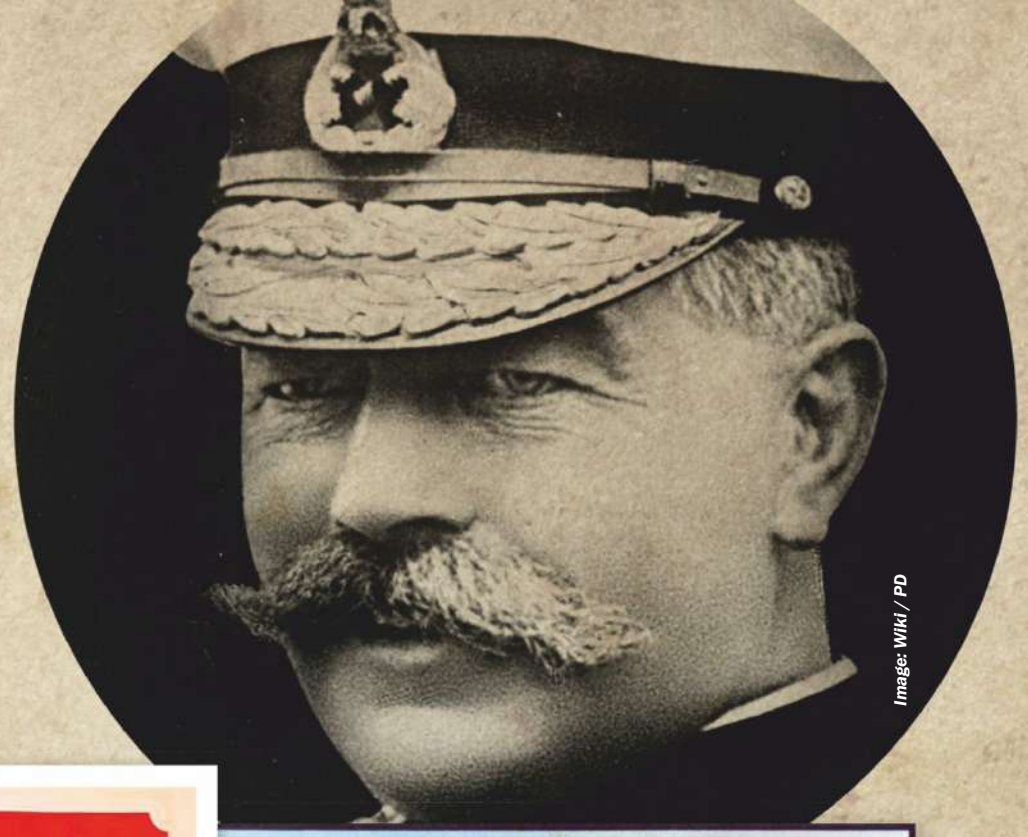
Without delay, sanction was sought for the raising of 500,000 men. Recruiting for the first 100,000 was announced in the press on 8 August 1914. "A Call To Arms! Your King and Country Need You," was carried prominently in all major regional papers. Kitchener's call made a direct connection with the men of Britain.

On the day 'the Call to Arms' was announced, recruitment was steady, but not overwhelming. Why was this the case? Perhaps it was a misunderstanding about the nature of the modern soldier – after all, Rudyard Kipling had done much to paint him as a rough diamond.

It was fortunate that recruitment took a sharp upwards turn in the wake of the retreat from Mons in late August. The initial engagement of the BEF had tested the Germans, but the weight of their advance was too much. With the French armies in retreat, the BEF had no choice but to retire. 'Thrilling' stories of plucky soldiers filled the newspapers on Saturday 29 August. The effect on recruiting was immediate; some

KITCHENER THE 'POSTER BOY'

The old general's image was used widely in Britain and the Empire, in humorous cartoons and serious propaganda drives



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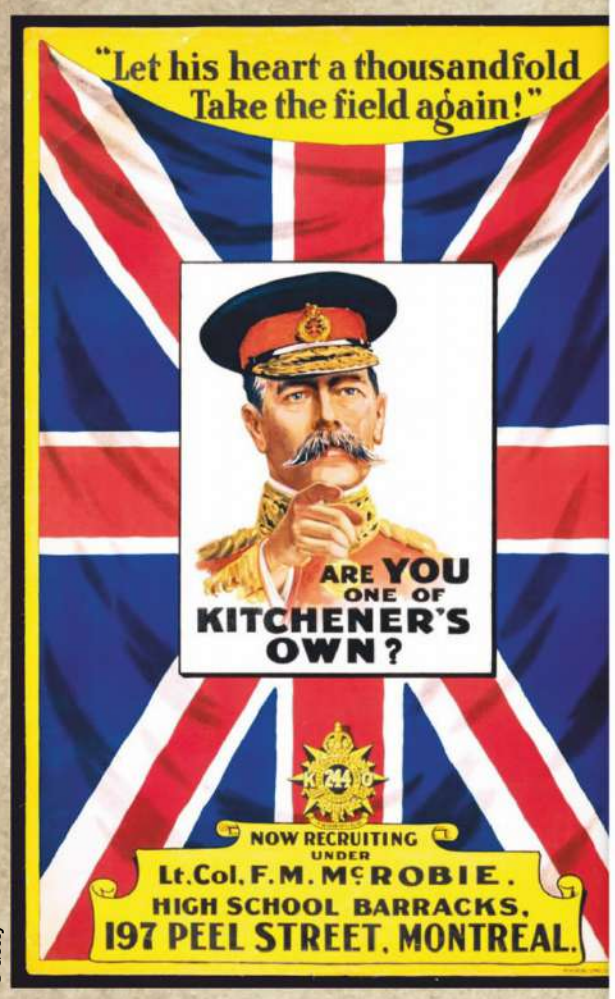

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Above: *A Canadian recruitment poster for the 244th (Kitchener's Own) Battalion, featuring a line from Amelia Josephine Burr's poem 'Kitchener's March'*

Image: Wiki / PD

Image: Wiki / PD

Kitchener's iconic poster was emulated in the USA's own recruitment drive featuring Uncle Sam

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Left: *A postcard featuring Kitchener in the guise of a chef*

Below: *A German soldier reads the* Daily Mail*, reporting on Kitchener's recruitment drive, circa 1915*

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20,909 joined on Monday 31 August, 27,914 on the Tuesday, 31,947 on the Wednesday, and 33,204 on Thursday 3 September 1914. Journalist Edgar Wallace noted, "Monday morning took the great army of young men … to their offices and business in the city. At every few yards they were confronted with the simple statement that their King and Country needed them. Then, perhaps, the inspiration came in a flash that it was they themselves to whom this appeal was being made!"

The first hundred thousand, 'K1'

Kitchener's first call for 100,000 men to swell the ranks in 1914 achieved its aim within two weeks. New battalions were formed, added to existing regiments. Each battalion was built piece-meal; as recruits enlisted, so they were added to the strength and transferred to the home depot. The first of the new Battalions to reach full strength was the 11th (Service) Battalion of the King's (Liverpool) Regiment, on 25 August 1914.

The recruitment of the second 100,000 tranche of Kitchener's Army men – known as K2 – was announced on 28 August 1914; this was timely, as the news from France, with the retreat from Mons, was alarming. Men were now joining from across a range of social classes, hardly a feature of the average pre-war battalion, and also at odds with the first 100,000, who were more often than not of the same class as the average run of Regular recruits – many of them ex-soldiers.

"KITCHENER'S FIRST CALL FOR 100,000 MEN TO SWELL THE RANKS IN 1914 ACHIEVED ITS AIM WITHIN TWO WEEKS"

With K1 being first in line, in some cases, resources were more limited for the next hundred thousand. This was particularly the case when it came to officers and NCOs. In many cases there was only one regular officer per battalion – hardly the kernel of knowledge required to ensure efficiency – and senior officers were often 'dugouts', or retired men.

Equipping the soldier

Finding these men uniforms and equipment was a significant challenge, and there were shortages. Reserves of clothing at the outbreak of war were for the fitting out and upkeep of the original Expeditionary Force. With the Regular army and Territorial force soldiers coming first, many would have to drill in their own clothes, be shod with their own boots and wear their own hats, come rain, come shine.

Armbands, hastily contrived, were worn with tweed jackets and impossibly large caps, while men drilled with canes and improvised wooden weapons. With khaki serge cloth in such short supply, and civilian clothes becoming threadbare, replacements were sought. In place of khaki, there was what became known as 'Kitchener Blue'.

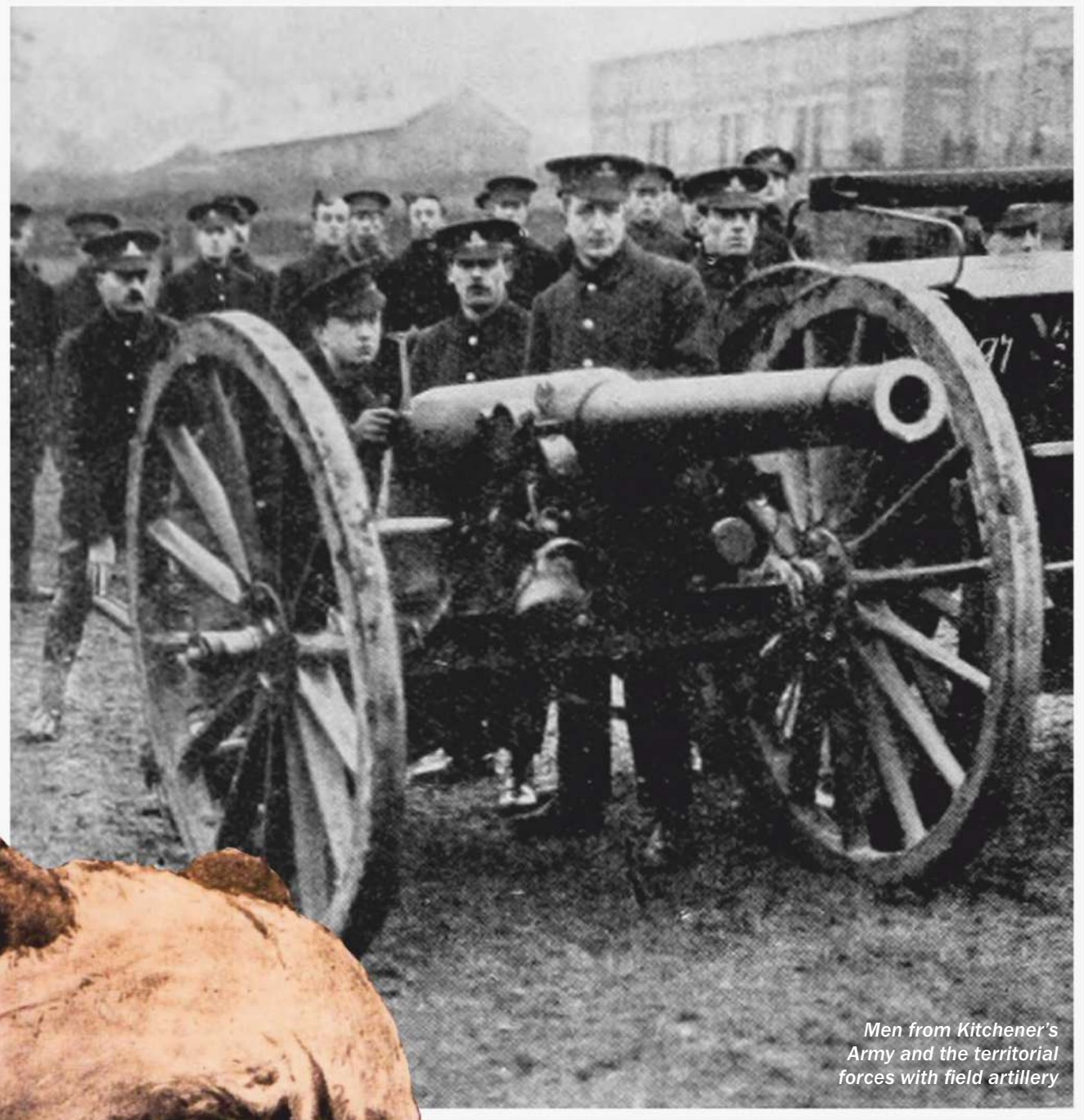
This uniform, created in haste to clothe a mass army, was almost universally shapeless. The first brand of 'blues' was simple, and therefore capable of being reproduced rapidly; but there is no doubt it was universally despised. Writing for the *Daily Telegraph* in 1914, Rudyard Kipling described a typical format of the blues, after observing some of

Men attending Lord Derby's recruiting campaign in Camberwell in December 1915

Kitchener's men, "They were clad in a blue garb that disguised all contours … When the New Army gets all its new uniform, it will gaze upon itself like a new Narcissus. But the present kit is indescribable. That is why, English fashion, it has been made honourable by its wearers; and our world in the years to come will look back with reverence as well as affection on those blue slops."

If the first men to join Kitchener's Army – the men of the First, Second and Third New Armies – faced being garbed with the hideous blue uniforms with indifference, it was a different story altogether once local dignitaries and regional pride started to play their part.

Superseding the awful blue uniform was something that was much more in line with the smart service dress worn by the regulars and territorials. These uniforms had brass buttons, patch pockets, improved fit and all the other refinements of the standard pattern of uniform. With civic pride at stake, the battalions of such cities as Manchester and Birmingham were clothed in smart blue service dress and matching caps from at least early 1915. In wool industry towns, like Bradford, it was a matter of pride that uniforms were to be made up to the sealed pattern in the best quality blue serge wool. Other battalions – with friends in high places – ignored the 'blues' all together. For some the shame of wearing such motley garb was too strong – and it was having a negative effect on morale overall.



Men from Kitchener's Army and the territorial forces with field artillery

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'Pals'

Towards the end of August 1914, prominent citizens were taking on the role of recruiting agents. Local committees were formed, led by Lord Mayors, people of influence and senior municipal officers, with the intention of gaining as many recruits as possible to fill the ranks of the New Army.

Image: Wiki / PD

'Kitchener's Army' is shown on spiked collar of a cartoon bulldog. The coat of arms of Germany is represented by the eagle crushed underfoot

Officers of the 17th Service Battalion of the Kings Liverpool Regiment, 2 July 1915

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Arguably the 'Pals' concept was born following a suggestion on 12 August 1914 by Sir Henry Rawlinson, then director of recruiting, that the City of London should raise a whole battalion of 'stockbrokers'. Sir Henry stated his belief that there were "many city employees who would be willing to enlist if they were assured that they would serve with their friends". There was an obvious implication; by 'friends', Rawlinson meant 'men of the same social class'. If such men were to be persuaded to join the ranks, then they would need some assurance that they would not feel out of place when standing next to navvies and dock-workers – a feature that immediately set apart the 'Pals' battalions from the men of the 'First Hundred Thousand' who had joined in the initial recruiting boom. It was highly successful; this was the breakthrough that was needed to reach out to the 'Commercial Classes'.

But the proliferation of the 'Pals' concept was in large part due to the action of Lord Derby, who, like Rawlinson, considered that the large number of working men serving in battalions might be off-putting to those whose workplace was the stock exchange, or works drafting office. Lord Derby was a hugely influential figure in Lancashire, and his intervention was to have a dramatic effect in the northwestern industrial powerhouses of Liverpool and Manchester. Lord Derby also raised the notion that men of the 'commercial classes' might wish to serve their country in a battalion of their comrades – their 'pals' – in a letter to the Liverpool press on 27 August 1914, "It has been suggested to me that there are many men, such as clerks and others engaged in commercial business, who wish to serve their country and would be willing to enlist in the battalion of Kitchener's New Army if they felt assured that they would be able to serve with their friends and not be put in a battalion with unknown men as their companions."

"THE POSTERS AND RECRUITING CAMPAIGNS HAD PERSUADED THE EARNEST, AND CAJOLED, EVEN BULLIED, THE TIMID INTO JOINING"

Once again the implication was that middle-class men would not be forced to serve alongside men they would neither know or nor understand; men of 'lower social strata'.

The response was overwhelming. By Tuesday 31 August, some 1,200 Liverpool men had volunteered, and the city was well on its way to filling its second 'City Battalion'. Lord Derby was thus the first to coin the phrase 'Pals Battalion' which was to become a watchword for the devastating losses felt by some local communities after the Somme in 1916. Four battalions were raised in total: 17th-20th (Service Battalions) King's Liverpool Regiment (1st-4th City). All would wear the crest of the Stanley Family, with Lord Derby presenting each man with a silver version – a mark that they were one of the 'originals'.

Lord Derby's initiative, and Liverpool's example, would help drive the Pals idea. Of course, Kitchener was not in a position to refuse such positive assistance. With the concept in the air – and with other cities and towns with a great feeling of civic pride – there was an avalanche of 'Pals' battalions. Some 38 per cent of all the Service Battalions raised were created by this route. In the months that followed, they would be joined by others from across the major and significant cities of Britain: Manchester, Newcastle, London, Birmingham, Glasgow, Bristol – in fact a proliferation that would have far reaching effects on the landscape of Britain's urban centres in the aftermath of the war.

Kitchener's Army had been a bold experiment. Born out of the impatience and imperiousness of one man – Field Marshal Lord Herbert Horatio Kitchener – it had been slow to ignite into a burning brand, a bright torch that was carried through the commercial cities of the Empire, the manufacturing giants, the cities of pride and of civic duty. The posters and recruiting campaigns had persuaded the earnest, and cajoled, even bullied, the timid into joining. It had demanded of the average citizen that he did the right thing, that he serve his country and earn the right of citizenship. One thing is clear: the road to the Somme paved by Kitchener's Army continued on to the victory of the Citizen Army in November 1918.

"TWO YEARS IN THE MAKING. TEN MINUTES IN THE DESTROYING"

For many volunteers, their first real taste of combat would tragically be their last

The first three 'New Army' divisions (around 35,000 men) landed in France in May 1915. Reinforcements were desperately needed to reinforce the BEF, but many regulars had reservations about the potential performance of the volunteer army. British graffiti was often found with variants of the slogan 'Lost or Stolen: Kitchener's Army – £5 Reward to Finder'.

Some of the 'Mob' were sceptical, including the future author and playwright J.B. Priestley who had volunteered in September 1914. He likened his battalion in the Duke of Wellington's Regiment to, "A kind of brave rabble." This scepticism was well founded. Thanks to the hasty recruitment process, British society was thrown together in a military melting pot and led by men of vastly differing ages. Henry Webber was a 67-year-old officer in the 7th South Lancashire Regiment, whereas Reginald Battersby, a second lieutenant in the 11th East Lancashire Regiment, was only 15.

For most in these battalions, their first action would be the Somme offensive, and its disastrous first day. An eight-day barrage had failed to destroy the deeply entrenched German positions and the British commanders, who were concerned about maintaining discipline in the new recruits, instructed the soldiers to advance in formation when the attack began at 7.30am. Unfortunately, this made them easy targets for the emerging German machine-gunners and thousands were cut down.

'Kitchener's Army', including the Pals, recorded grim statistics on 1 July. The Tyneside Brigades suffered terribly, with the Scots enduring 2,400 casualties and the Irish 2,100. Most were killed within the first hour of battle. Both the Grimsby Chums and the Sheffield City Battalion lost around half their men. The Leeds Pals lost 750 out of 900 men.

Many of the Pals' casualties occurred when battalions of the 94th Brigade tried to capture the hilltop fortress of Serre. Units that led the attack included the Accrington Pals and Sheffield City Battalion and were supported

A support company of the Tyneside Irish Brigade advancing from the Tara-Usna Line opposite La Boisselle on 1 July 1916

Image: Wiki / PD

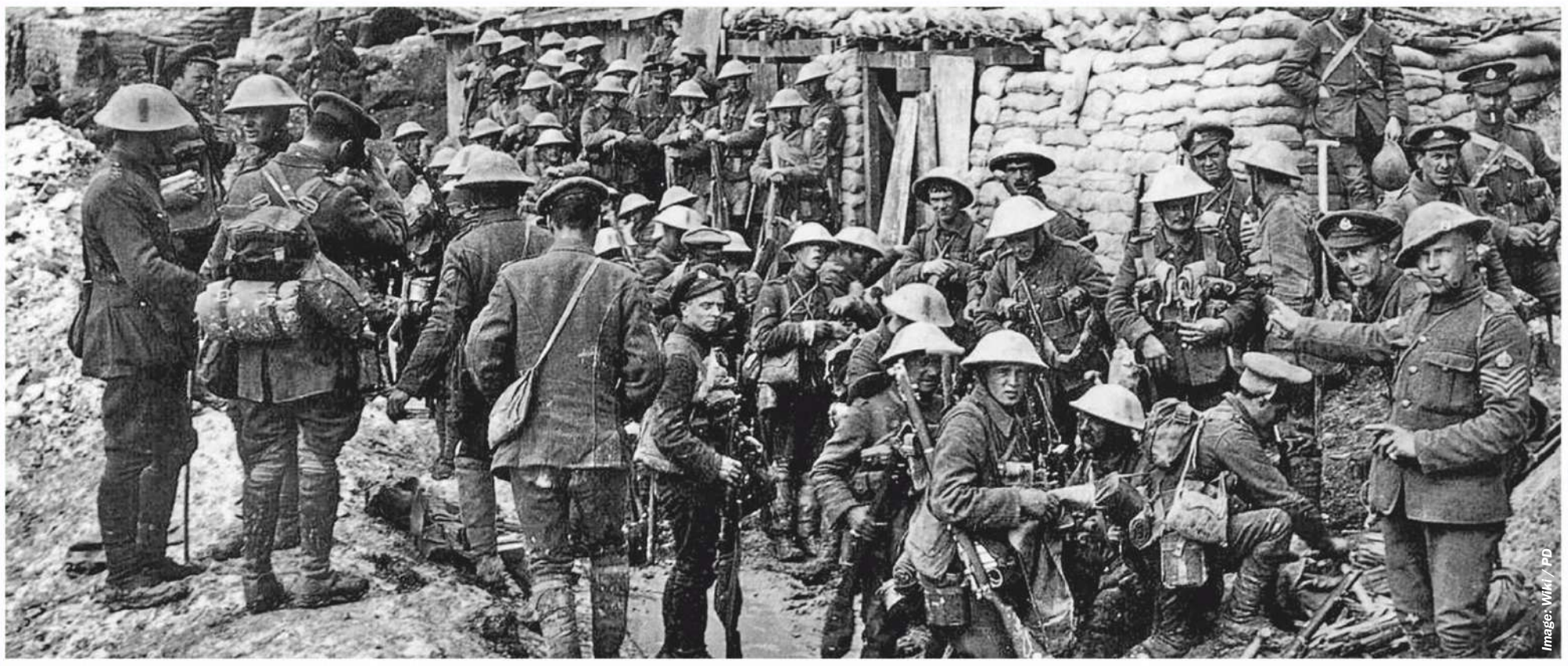

Image: Wiki / PD

1st Battalion, East Lancashire Regiment at 'White City', opposite Beaumont Hamel prior to the Battle of the Somme, 1916

by the Barnsley Pals, but they were marching towards the experienced 169th (8th Baden) Infantry Regiment. Even before the attack the Pals had arrived in shell-damaged British trenches and were pounded by enemy artillery before daylight broke. At zero hour the leading waves were torn by machine-gun and rifle fire.

Some of the Accrington and Sheffield Pals got through to the German front line but the attack was in vain. Brigadier Rees recorded, "The result of the shells, shrapnel, machine-gun and rifle fire was such that hardly any of our men reached the German front trench. The lines which advanced in such admirable order, melted away under fire; yet not a man wavered, broke the ranks or attempted to go back. I have never seen such a magnificent display of gallantry, discipline and determination." The Accrington Pals suffered 584 casualties out of 720.

The first day saw the death of the Pals Battalions, but news of their destruction was slow to reach Britain. Relatives often only discovered the fate of their loved ones when letters reached the families of the dead. The casualty lists did not reach Grimsby until 10 July and rumours gripped panicked communities. In Accrington, the brother of one volunteer recalled a scene of grief that would have been replicated across Britain, "I remember when the news came through that the Pals had been wiped out. I don't think there was a street that didn't have their blinds drawn, and the bell at Christ Church tolled all day."

After the Somme campaign was done, the Pals Battalions survived in name only. Enthusiasm decreased and newly introduced conscripts replaced the volunteers. When WWII began, conscription was immediately implemented. The wasteful death of the Pals on 1 July 1916 left a sad legacy. As one surviving veteran put it, "Two years in the making. Ten minutes in the destroying. That was our history."

"THE LINES WHICH ADVANCED IN SUCH ADMIRABLE ORDER, MELTED AWAY UNDER FIRE; YET NOT A MAN WAVERED, BROKE THE RANKS OR ATTEMPTED TO GO BACK. I HAVE NEVER SEEN SUCH A MAGNIFICENT DISPLAY OF GALLANTRY, DISCIPLINE AND DETERMINATION"

BRITAIN'S 'DOOMED' ARMIES

Following the huge national recruitment drive, whole communities joined up

14TH, 15TH, 16TH BATTALIONS, ROYAL WARWICKSHIRE REGIMENT

THE BIRMINGHAM PALS
FORMED: 30 AUGUST 1914
STRENGTH: 3,000 MEN

These battalions were posted to Italy at different times during the war as well as serving on the Somme.

103RD BRIGADE, ROYAL NORTHUMBERLAND FUSILIERS

TYNESIDE IRISH
FORMED: 14 OCTOBER 1914
STRENGTH: 5,400 MEN

After enthusiastically raising a whole brigade, the Tyneside Irish advanced on 1 July 1916 to the march of a bass drum but suffered heavy casualties.

10TH BATTALION LINCOLNSHIRE REGIMENT

GRIMSBY CHUMS
FORMED: SEPTEMBER 1914
STRENGTH: 1,000 MEN

Although the collective name for Lord Kitchener's 'New Armies' were 'Pals Battalions', Grimsby was the only unit out of around 304 battalions to be called 'Chums'.

16TH BATTALION, MIDDLESEX REGIMENT, 18TH - 21ST BATTALIONS, ROYAL FUSILIERS

PUBLIC SCHOOLS BATTALIONS
FORMED: 1-11 SEPTEMBER 1914
STRENGTH: 5,000 MEN

Exclusively made up of public schoolboys and university students, the volunteers were expected to become officers in other regiments. However, many chose to remain as privates in order to stay with their friends.

13TH - 14TH BATTALIONS, YORK & LANCASTER REGIMENT

BARNSLEY PALS
FORMED: SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1914
STRENGTH: 2,000 MEN

The 13th Battalion was first posted to Egypt before being sent to France in March 1916. On 1 July, the combined battalions suffered 545 casualties, a loss of over a quarter of their strength.

"THE VOLUNTEERS WERE EXPECTED TO BECOME OFFICERS IN OTHER REGIMENTS. HOWEVER, MANY CHOSE TO REMAIN AS PRIVATES IN ORDER TO STAY WITH THEIR FRIENDS"

17TH - 20TH BATTALIONS, THE KING'S (LIVERPOOL REGIMENT)

LIVERPOOL PALS
FORMED: AUGUST 1914
STRENGTH: 4,000 MEN

The Liverpool Pals set the precedent for recruiting northern working men but its volunteers consisted of commercial workers including those who worked in shipping, insurance and brokerage.

10TH - 13TH BATTALIONS, LOCAL RESERVE BATTALION, EAST YORKSHIRE REGIMENT

1ST HULL 'COMMERCIALS',
2ND HULL 'TRADESMEN',
3RD HULL 'SPORTSMEN',
4TH HULL 'T'OTHERS',
5TH HULL 'BANTAMS'
FORMED: SEPTEMBER-NOVEMBER 1914
STRENGTH: 6,000 MEN

Occupations and interests divided battalions from Hull. The 'Commercials' were raised from clerks and businessmen, the 'Tradesmen' consisted of welders and joiners, 'Bantams' were men of 'smaller stature but big hearts' and 'T'Others' were men of any class or trade.

17TH BATTALION, MIDDLESEX REGIMENT

FOOTBALL BATTALION
FORMED: 15 DECEMBER 1914
STRENGTH: 600 MEN

Founded in Fulham, this battalion comprised of hundreds of professional footballers from 50 clubs including Chelsea, West Ham, Liverpool and Reading. The professional players were also supplemented by amateur players, officials and fans.

16TH - 23RD BATTALIONS, MANCHESTER REGIMENT

MANCHESTER REGIMENT
FORMED: AUGUST-SEPTEMBER 1914
STRENGTH: 10,000 MEN

During the course of World War I the Manchester Pals lost 4,776 men out of almost 10,000. The Manchester Regiment in total lost 13,000 casualties, of which 37 percent were from the Pals.

11TH EAST LANCASHIRE REGIMENT

ACCRINGTON PALS
FORMED: 14 SEPTEMBER 1914
STRENGTH: 1,100 MEN

The most famous Pals Battalion fought bravely on 1 July 1916 but were almost wiped out. The battalion included volunteers not just from Accrington but also Burnley, Chorley and Blackburn.

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INTERVIEW WITH MAJOR (RETD.) MIKE SEEAR

WORDS TOM GARNER

Nepal's renowned soldiers played a remarkable role during the Falklands War where their fearsome reputation alone had the ability to determine battles

It is an extremely cold night on a barren, snow-covered hill in the South Atlantic. Artillery shells explode among riflemen as they climb upwards, but these are no ordinary troops. Although they hail from a small country in the Himalayas, they are the British Army's crack warriors – the Gurkhas. Armed with rifles and fabled kukri knives, they are about to take the hill's northeast spur from Argentine forces during the remote but bloody Falklands War. Afterwards, they will line up to take another occupied hill before overall victory is secured. The question is – will the enemy continue to resist these fearless soldiers?

The Gurkhas' story during the conflict has been relatively forgotten but their very presence spread fear among the enemy. Accompanying them all the way in 1982 was a 35-year-old British officer – Major Mike Seear. Seconded to the 1st Battalion, 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles, Seear deployed with these elite troops on East Falkland and describes a campaign of intense bombardments, low supplies, advancing uphill to battle and the extraordinary soldiers he served with.

Joining the Gurkhas

Seear spent part of his childhood (1954-57) in Kuala Lumpur during the twelve-year long Malayan Emergency. His father was an RAF Wing Commander and WWII Malta veteran who had seconded to the Special Branch of the Malayan Police.

This became his son's introduction to the Gurkhas, "Father would go into ambushes with the Gurkhas and his job was to interrogate captured Communist Terrorists. I remember him telling me one day, 'Well my son, I'm going out into the jungle today for an ambush'. He showed me his Browning 9mm pistol with an ammunition clip."

Seear subsequently attended the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and was commissioned as an officer in 1968. During the 1970s, he joined The Light Infantry and served for a total of 22 months in Northern Ireland during the 'Troubles'. He was also stationed in Hong Kong during 1976 where he came into closer contact with the Gurkhas, "That's where I thought a secondment with the Brigade of Gurkhas would be worthwhile and decided to apply in 1981."

Seear succeeded and was seconded to 1st Battalion, 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles as their Operations and Training Officer, "The appointment was essentially the right-hand staff officer of the battalion's

TUMBLEDOWN

MOUNT WILLIAM

© Alamy

Image: Mike Seear

Major Mike Seear pictured onboard QE2, 12 May 1982. His shoulder epaulette reads '7GR' for the 7th Gurkha Rifles

A view of both Tumbledown and Mount William. Two battles were planned to be fought on both hills although the Gurkhas' reputation ensured that only one had to be fought on Tumbledown

© Alamy

“THEIR VERY PRESENCE SPREAD FEAR AMONG ARGENTINE FORCES”

A Gurkha solider leaving for the Falklands on QE2 in 1982

commanding officer. I was responsible for the SOPs [Standard Operating Procedures], coordinating the training, participating in operational planning and, on the battlefield, I worked with a 38-man Battalion Tactical Headquarters. This included British gunners, engineers, signals and medical attachments."

Before seconding, Seear was told that serving with the Gurkhas would be "your only chance of experiencing 19th century soldiering" although the reality was far more nuanced, "They had a totally different cultural setup. There were 1,000 Gurkhas in the Battalion with 250 away at any one time on six-months leave in Nepal. They returned to serve for another three years before being granted another round of Nepal leave.

"I think they also admired, to a degree, the British officer. They would be treated fairly by the 'gora saheb' ('white officer') and willingly obeyed them. However, you still had to lead by example and work together with them on their level."

Under normal circumstances, Seear would also have learned the Gurkhas' language but this was interrupted by unforeseen events, "Gurkhali is a military version of Nepali and I was going to do a language course in May 1982 in Hong Kong. Unfortunately, this had to be postponed because we deployed to the South Atlantic that month."

"Utter surprise"

In early April 1982, Argentine forces invaded and occupied the Falkland Islands and South Georgia. The British government hastily assembled a 'Task Force' to retake the islands but the invasion was unexpected, "It was a total, utter surprise. One week there was no problem and then suddenly there was a big problem. We realised that we were going to go on Operation Corporate [the British Falklands campaign] because we were part of 5 Infantry Brigade, which had a NATO 'Out of Area' role."

The Task Force initially deployed included 3 Commando Brigade, while 5 Infantry Brigade followed. With 3 Commando Brigade already en route to the South Atlantic, the Gurkhas went into intensive preparations, "We started training from the word go and didn't even wait for any executive order from Brigade Headquarters. The islands were invaded on Friday 2 April 1982 and I was instructed to put together a battalion training programme to start on Monday 5 April. We trained for six weeks in Hampshire and Wales right through to our embarkation." The preparations were an anxious time, "It was tricky. I never believed I would go to war in the literal sense of the word. Northern Ireland was one thing but then deploying to a conventional, expeditionary war was quite surreal. It took some time to get used to and I also maintain that those who were married and had young children, like I did, were at a bit of a disadvantage. However, one just had to get on with it."

"WE ENDURED A GALE FORCE 8-9, WHICH LENGTHENED OUR VOYAGE BY 24 HOURS. THE GURKHAS WERE HIT BY A MAJOR SEASICKNESS EPIDEMIC WHICH FORCED THEM ONTO THEIR CABIN BUNK"

On 12 May, the Gurkhas embarked for the Falklands on board the converted liner RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 (QE2) at Southampton. It was the beginning of a southerly journey that lasted for 20 days with stops at Sierra Leone and Ascension Island. When QE2 reached South Georgia, the Gurkhas transferred onto MV Norland – a converted North Sea ferry – for the final leg of the journey.

Norland's voyage lasted over three days in atrocious weather conditions, "We endured a Gale Force 8-9, which lengthened our voyage by 24 hours. The Gurkhas suffered a major seasickness epidemic which forced them onto their cabin bunks."

An unpleasant welcome

The Gurkhas finally arrived at San Carlos Water, East Falkland in the early morning of 1 June. Seear recalls seeing an oddly familiar landscape, "My first sight of the Falklands was from Norland's car deck staring at the surrounding dark hillsides. The terrain was the spitting image of Wales with a very thick tussock grass which made movement very difficult."

The battalion's landing was hampered by enemy aircraft activity, "We had breakfast prior to disembarkation into the LCUs [Landing Craft, Utility] with 200 soldiers at a time. Gathering on the upper deck, we received our first 'red air alert'. Two enemy Canberra bombers were attacking targets on Mount Kent, a large mountain in the middle of East Falkland. They were chased away by a Fleet Air Arm Sea Harrier and I remember being told, 'Get back into your cabins, lie on your bunks and wait for the order to move'. Lying in the prone position would reduce the concussion effect of exploding bombs."

After this, the battalion finally disembarked into LCUs bound for 'Blue Beach 2' at San Carlos, "After moving three kilometres south from the settlement I received another red air alert. Shortly afterwards the Chinook 'Bravo November' – the only helicopter to survive the fatal Exocet missile attack on the aircraft transport SS Atlantic Conveyor – arrived at our location. The Chinook normally takes 48 seated men but all the seats had been thrown out. We marched 80 Gurkhas up the rear ramp and flew to Goose Green."

Unfortunately others had to march for long distances, "The Chinook flew three trips but our D Company was tasked with setting up a defensive screen on Sussex Mountain for 48 hours. They then had to march to Goose Green, which was 25 kilometres away. The going was horrendous and it took them 30 hours to move with full kit that weighed 50 kilos so they did well."

Even upon their arrival, the Gurkhas had to be vigilant, "We had a third red air alert on 1 June when we arrived at Goose Green and were still were vulnerable. It was the end of an eventful first day."

Gurkhas train with their weapons aboard QE2

© Alamy

The battalion is pictured cross-decking onto MV Norland from QE2 at South Georgia, 28 May 1982

The 7th Gurkha Rifles Battalion Tactical HQ (including Seear, second from left) pictured at Wether Ground, 13 June 1982

Inset images: Mike Seear

Gurkhas being airlifted from Goose Green. The battalion garrisoned the settlement a few days after the bloody battle that was fought by the Parachute Regiment

The 7th Gurkha Rifles present their kukris during a parade at Aldershot, England, 12 October 1971. Their regimental motto was 'Jai Seventh!' ('Hail Seventh!')

JAI SEVENTH!

The 7th Duke of Edinburgh's Own Gurkha Rifles had a distinguished history during the 20th century where it fought in many of the United Kingdom's major conflicts

Formed on 16 May 1902, the regiment became known as the '7th Gurkha Rifles' in 1907 and recruited soldiers from the area around the Nepali capital of Kathmandu. During WWI, the 7th Gurkhas fought in the Middle East before participating in the Third Anglo-Afghan War in 1919. Its most significant active service came during WWII where its three battalions served across the world.

The 2nd Battalion initially fought in Syria and North Africa, where it was captured at Tobruk in 1942. A new battalion was formed to replace it for the Italian Campaign where it earned the rare distinction of its own battle honour at Monte Cassino. Meanwhile, the 1st and 3rd Battalions fought in Burma against Japanese forces where they took heavy casualties. Nevertheless, they took a prominent part in the Allied victory at the Battle of Imphal, recapturing Meiktila and liberating Rangoon. One of 1st Battalion's soldiers, Rifleman Ganju Lama, won the Victoria Cross for his extreme bravery near Ningthoukhong, India on 12 June 1944.

The 7th Gurkhas went on to serve in Britain's decolonisation conflicts such as the Malayan Emergency, Brunei Revolt and Indonesia-Malaysia Confrontation. Its success in Malaya was royally recognised when it was renamed the 'Duke of Edinburgh's Own' in 1959 in honour of Prince Philip. The Falklands War was the last time the regiment earned a battle honour before it was officially disbanded on 26 May 1994.

Image: Wiki / FU

Ganju Lama (1924-2000) won his Victoria Cross by single-handedly destroying two Japanese tanks with a PIAT gun despite being heavily wounded. He was also the recipient of the Military Medal

© Getty

Goose Green

Four days before the Gurkhas arrived, a significant battle had been fought at Goose Green on 28 May. A combined total of 67 British paratroopers and Argentine soldiers had been killed, including 2 Para's Lieutenant Colonel 'H' Jones who was awarded a posthumous Victoria Cross. His paratroopers were still there when Seear arrived, "There were a lot of paratroopers and there had been a fair amount of post-battle cleaning up going on. The place was a mess and 129 [locals] were jammed into a small community centre with only two toilets so things were not good. They then discovered that their homes had been vandalised by the Argentines. The Gurkhas helped them to clear up."

The Gurkhas also assumed responsibility for 471 Argentine prisoners, "We took over the garrison of Goose Green as well as control of prisoners," Seear continues. "They were very sullen and silent. Those who had been wounded or were in a bad condition had already been moved out, but the remainder were placed in the local sheep-shearing sheds. Slowly but surely, they were all [moved] by helicopter to San Carlos because we would soon have to advance eastwards in the opposite direction."

Meanwhile, the battalion began planning for a battle near the capital of Stanley from 6 June, "There was a probability that we would be attacking both Tumbledown and Mount William. We did not know then that 2nd Battalion, Scots Guards objective would be Tumbledown and ours Mount William. We looked at both objectives with the initial concept of us attacking together with the Scots Guards."

Bombardment, logistics and television

When the Gurkhas left Goose Green to advance towards Stanley, they experienced major logistical problems. This was due to the severe loss of helicopters during the sinking of SS Atlantic Conveyor, "It forced 3 Commando Brigade to march along the northern flank while most of 5 Infantry Brigade would be moved by sea to Fitzroy and Bluff Cove. Our D Company moved by ship to Fitzroy and, after establishing defensive positions at Little Wether Ground on 8 June, they witnessed the enemy air strike at Port Pleasant on RFAs Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram. This killed and wounded [many] and the Gurkhas fired 4,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition at two of the escaping enemy Skyhawk aircraft. The next day, Battalion Tactical Headquarters and A Company flew by helicopter to Little Wether Ground. B Company joined us on 10 June before we marched seven kilometres along the coast to Wether Ground." Here Seear and his men dug in to protect the gun line of 29 Battery, 4 Field Regiment, RA.

Preparations continued for the upcoming battle, "There were consecutive days of planning from 9-13 June for how Tumbledown and Mount William would be taken. The airstrikes on the Sir Galahad and Sir Tristram relegated 1st Battalion, Welsh Guards to being in reserve. Two of their companies were replaced by two Royal Marine 40 Commando companies."

While the Gurkhas were at Wether Ground they were spotted by Argentine artillery observers, "We had 36 hours of coming under 155mm enemy artillery fire and it was not much fun. The Gurkhas became worried about those massive shell explosions. Our B Company Commander had to get out of his trench to walk around the Company position and tell his men to take cover in their trenches. Such fundamental leadership had to be applied all that day and into the morning of 12 June."

Seear recalls the exceptional power of the shell explosions, "Sporadic shellfire (at a rate of six to eight rounds per hour) was directed at the Gurkhas from Mount Harriet. I can compare the 155mm fire to a major car bomb going off in Northern Ireland. The explosive force and accompanying pillar of peat soil would leap 200 feet into the air. The noise and kinetic effect of the explosions were alarming to say the least."

Despite this, the Gurkhas were fortunate, "The enemy gunners weren't all that good. They had miscalculated their fuse settings and were trying to hit us with flying shrapnel, but it wasn't working. If they had set their fuses correctly then I think we would have had a lot more casualties than the four B Company Gurkhas who were wounded by the shellfire."

Years later, Seear encountered the man who directed the 155mm shelling from Mount Harriet, "I was invited to Lieutenant-Colonel Tommy Fox's Buenos Aires flat on my second

A Gurkha practices with his machine-gun, 5 May 1982

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Gurkhas train with their SLR rifles for the Falklands War, 6 May 1982

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trip to Argentina in 2003. We and his wife had a nice cup of tea and a restaurant meal while we shared our war experiences."

Compounding the Gurkhas' problems was a severe lack of supplies such as ammunition, rations and water. This caused the brigade attack to be postponed by 24 hours. Provisions were to be sent to the battalion in the evening prior to departure, but the arriving Sea King helicopter was not what Seear was expecting, "I thought, 'Good, this must be our rations' but out jumped BBC TV's Brian Hanrahan, ITN's Mike Nicholson and their camera crew. They were angry because they had been thrown out of 5 Brigade Headquarters and sent to us."

In his secondary role as the Battalion's Public Information Officer, Seear made the best out of the situation, "I decided to be professional and gave them an hour-long briefing. Brian Hanrahan was quiet while Mike Nicholson engaged me more in conversation. He said, 'We've got our joint BBC-ITN camera crew here, can we come with your Battalion Tactical Headquarters into the attack on Tumbledown and Mount William?'"

Seear declined this request because the attack would take place at night and there would be no opportunity to film in the dark. He instead suggested that the correspondents accompany the Battalion Alternative Headquarters on Two Sisters, "That is what they did, and they got good film shots of these Gurkhas for the seventh episode of the later BBC TV documentary *Task Force South*."

Seear's next task came on the following morning, "My job was to organise a 467-man fly-out from Wether Ground to a location south of Two Sisters where we were to establish our Assembly Area prior to the attacks on Tumbledown and Mount William."

Tumbledown

This major move went well despite enemy shelling of the helicopter landing site near Two Sisters. Then, on the night of 13-14 June, the time finally came for the Gurkhas to go into action on Tumbledown and, eventually, nearby Mount William, "It was the Scots Guards' mission to take the whole of Tumbledown, except for its northeast spur. That objective was for our Gurkha B Company and, once that was taken, we were to switch the direction of our attack from north to south.

"D Company would then assault Mount William, which lies about 800 metres south of Tumbledown. There was the equivalent of an enemy company from 5th Marine Infantry Battalion, with C Company of the Argentine 3rd Infantry Regiment just off Mount William's eastern shoulder. I later calculated that 197 of the enemy were on Mount William waiting for our D Company – the latter were outnumbered two to one."

Seear was understandably anxious before the battle started, "It was a time when the waiting and growing fear of the unknown was the worst. However, I was fortunate being the Battalion Operations Officer because I became involved in a major argument with Brigade Headquarters about the location of the casualty evacuation helicopter landing site. This had been positioned six kilometres from Tumbledown and I said, 'This is useless. Any helicopters must come in much closer to pick up casualties!'

"I was encoding and decoding map grid references and arguing like mad with a clueless Brigade Watchkeeper for two hours. Yet conversely that was great because it occupied my time and energy instead of thinking about the forthcoming attack. When I later moved into the Assembly Area at Goat Ridge I went into 'autopilot' and the training kicked in."

The Scots Guards were delayed in their attack on the west end of Tumbledown when a 44-man Argentine platoon held them up for six hours. Their Left Flank Company eventually carried out a bayonet charge at approximately 8.30am on 14 June to capture this position. This delay to the Scots Guards complicated the Gurkhas' plans, "We were going to carry out our attack in the dark but, by then, it was nearly first light. We were now committed to attacking Mount William later in daylight, which was not a pleasant thought."

The Gurkhas advanced along the northern slopes of Tumbledown while the Scots Guards attacked the west end, "As we moved up towards the eastern summit where would establish our Battalion Fire Base and Tactical HQ we were bombarded for an hour by 105mm artillery shells and mortar bombs. Eight men were wounded and I will never forget the initial barrage that came down on us. Two shells landed about from 15 metres from our Tactical HQ but they didn't explode. If they had then I wouldn't be giving this interview."

This period of the battle on Tumbledown was a sobering experience, "I felt like I was the White Rabbit in *Alice in Wonderland* – trying to scramble into a non-existent burrow to take cover. Instead, I lay on the icy ground hoping that the incoming shells and mortar bombs would miss as flying shrapnel zinged in the air. It was most unpleasant."

***Below, top:** The 7th Gurkha Rifles Battalion Tactical HQ moves through Tumbledown's northeast summit, 14 June 1982*

***Below, bottom:** Gurkhas pictured under enemy mortar fire on Tumbledown's northeast summit, 14 June 1982*

Gurkha rifleman pictured in heavy clothing for protection from the elements the day before the Battle of Tumbledown, 13 June 1982

Images: Mike Seear

A piper plays as members of the Gurkha Rifles board the liner RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 at Southampton before sailing to the South Atlantic during the Falklands War

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Source: Wiki / 663highland / CC

***Above:** QE2 came from a long line of famous Cunard ships that include RMS Carpathia, the vessel that rescued the survivors of RMS Titanic and RMS Lusitania, which was torpedoed by a German U-boat in 1915*

QE2 AT WAR

One of the world's most famous ocean liners was converted into a troopship for the only time in its decades-long service

RMS Queen Elizabeth 2 (commonly known as 'QE2') was a symbol of modern elegance and engineering. Designed as a transatlantic liner, she completed 1,400 voyages, sailed six million nautical miles and entertained almost 2.5 million passengers during her service between 1969-2008. Famed for her luxurious hospitality, over 70,000 bottles of champagne were consumed on average aboard QE2 and it also boasted the largest cinema at sea for 481 spectators.

QE2 was also large and fast with an average speed of 28.5 knots. She was requisitioned by the British government for service as a troop carrier at the beginning of the Falklands War. One quarter of the ship's length was reinforced with steel plating, two helicopter pads were installed and anti-magnetic coils were fitted to combat naval mines. 650 crew members volunteered for the voyage to the South Atlantic, which departed from Southampton on 12 May 1982.

Seear has positive memories of sailing on the liner, "The QE2 was very good. There were 3,200 troops on board although civilian numbers were usually 1,500. Everybody was doubled up in the cabins but it was a good way to get down to the Falklands because we had plenty of time to train on board for weapons and physical training. We could also do briefings, pick up intelligence information and generally prepare ourselves."

© Getty

Image: Mike Seear

Image: Mike Seear

Image: Mike Seear

Above: *Seear captured the moment of the de-facto ceasefire that ended the war on the eastern end of Tumbledown, 14 June 1982*

Left: *Argentine prisoners sit behind a barbed wire compound on the Falkland Islands, June 1982*

Above, top: *Gurkhas on Mount William during a snow blizzard the day after hostilities ended. Seear is pictured on the far right*

Right: *Mike Seear on Mount William, 15 June 1982*

Far right: *Gurkhas present their kukris to British Defence Secretary John Nott, August 1982*

"THE GURKHA MYTH UNDERMINED THE MORALE OF THE ARGENTINE GROUND FORCES. OF THAT, THERE IS NO DOUBT"

Once the bombardment ended, the Gurkhas moved to the eastern end of Tumbledown. Despite still being under fire, Seear and some of his men paused for refreshments, "I had two efficient British signallers and when we got to the top of Tumbledown one of them asked, 'Hey sir, would you like a brew?' I said 'Yes, excellent!' so we enjoyed a mug of hot tea while we set up the Battalion Tactical HQ, as sporadic enemy mortar fire was still coming down. It was typical that British tea proved its worth in the middle of a battle, and it was a morale boost to get some hot stuff down your neck!"

Once the Scots Guards captured the east end of Tumbledown, the Gurkhas prepared for the next stage of their attack, "Before this there was an ugly 'blue-on-blue' incident when a Scots Guardsman shot and wounded one of our artillery Forward Observation Officers. B Company then took the northeast spur. This was preceded by an intense ten-minute artillery bombardment of 500 shells exploding in a 200 by 200 metre area. Meanwhile, D Company had moved up past us and lined up to take Mount William. They were delayed by enemy mortar fire and the attack was due to start at 3.45pm."

The Gurkhas' formidable reputation had already reached the enemy, "When B Company took Tumbledown's northeast spur they captured three Argentine prisoners in a trench. One spoke English and said, 'There were three things we were most worried about: the artillery, Sea Harriers and you Gurkhas."

Seear explains that the enemy's fear of the Gurkhas prevented a further bloody battle, "This would have been the Battle of Mount William; but it never happened because the defenders did not want to fight the Gurkhas. I have since become friends with Esteban Pino, a former Argentine conscript of 3rd Infantry Regiment, which was located near Mount William. He has stated, 'During that night [13 June], we were waiting for the attack of the Gurkhas. It occurred the following day when we had abandoned our positions and headed to Puerto Argentino [Stanley] for the final battle'.

"Once D Company received the order to cross its 'Start Line', the remaining Argentines also withdrew off Mount William and back to Stanley. The Gurkhas' reputation had preceded them and that's the best way to fight a war."

The Gurkhas were frustrated but their contribution to the Battle of Tumbledown (which resulted in combined British-Argentine casualties of 42 killed and 121 wounded) hastened the fall of Stanley, "They had performed excellently but were disappointed that they didn't see any combat on Mount William. I've heard some arguments that say that Tumbledown and the proposed Battle of Mount William was totally unnecessary but they needed taking out simply because the Argentine 5th Marine Infantry Battalion had positioned its heavily reinforced N Company on those features. Later in the battle N Company was further reinforced by the Argentine Army's B Company of the 6th Infantry Regiment. I personally think it was necessary to secure the route into Stanley."

A de-facto ceasefire was declared on the afternoon of 14 June and Stanley was retaken by the British without any fighting. The Gurkhas were still on Tumbledown, "We were given the order to stop firing on the Argentines except in self-defence and D Company now occupied Mount William. The actual surrender didn't officially occur until midnight that night but the Argentines threw their weapons away. It was like the air had been popped out of a balloon."

False narratives

By 14 June, the Gurkhas had been on East Falkland for a fortnight and had endured intense but largely ineffective enemy fire for five days. Seear considers that the Argentine leadership was too uneven for them to win, "On the one hand there was Acting Sub-Lieutenant Carlos Daniel Vázquez who led the 44-man platoon on Tumbledown. This had been reinforced by Army conscripts 24 hours before

the battle started but he managed to gear up his men. They offered considerable resistance to the Scots Guards, but if you don't have people who can lead properly then the whole thing is simply not going to work."

The Argentines also feared the Gurkhas based on false rumours, "There was a lot of nonsense talked about the Gurkhas in Argentina that they were cannibals and ate people alive etc. I've translated a passage from a book written by Nicolás Kasanzew, the only Argentine TV war correspondent on the Falklands who I met three decades post-war. He said that after the battles of Mount Longdon, Mount Harriet and Two Sisters he was waiting in Stanley and asked a score of returning Argentine infantry conscripts what they had experienced. He wrote, 'All of them unanimously claimed to have seen that these (Gurkha) troops went to slaughter the wounded and those who tried to surrender'.

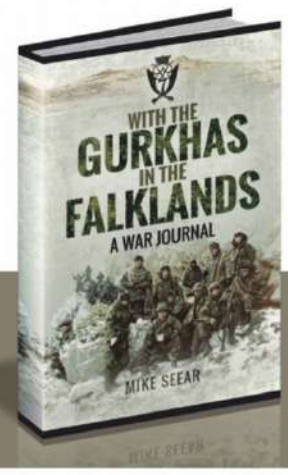
"The stories were totally made up. These conscripts had to show bravado that they had fought the Gurkhas despite the truth that the latter never engaged any enemy in land combat during the war."

Ironically, while the Gurkhas' participation in the Falklands campaign has been forgotten in the UK, it continues to be remembered in Argentina, "Blatant lies have emerged about the Gurkhas constantly fighting conscripts. These are myths that continue to live a life of their own, but which are not mentioned in the UK where the focus is only on other British units. However, the Gurkha battlefield reputation undermined the morale of the Argentine ground forces. Of that, there is no doubt."

After the war and leaving the 1st/7th Gurkha Rifles, Seear worked at NATO's Allied Forces Northern Europe HQ near Oslo before retiring from the army in 1988. He still lives in Norway where he now works as a consultant in crisis management. He acknowledges that the Falklands War changed his life, "It was very much a once-in-a-lifetime event. I lived one life before the war, and another afterwards. I learned a lot about myself and about other people in that situation. It's something that I wouldn't want to do again but it gave me a new platform in life. Professionally, I continue to deliver exercises and hold lectures on the war and will continue to do that."

During the war, the 1st/7th Gurkha Rifles suffered 13 casualties, although they luckily received no fatalities. There have since been various reviews of their future in the British Army but Seear points out that they have become an increasingly invaluable asset, "Gurkha numbers in the British Army have been expanding because, in recent years, there has been a major recruiting shortfall… so the Ministry of Defence is recruiting more Gurkhas. There is an enormous prestige in Nepal to become a British Gurkha soldier and approximately 250 Nepalis are recruited for service annually. Indeed, Gurkha rifle companies are now reinforcing British infantry battalions to make up the numbers."

As to their reputation as great military fighters, Seear holds them in the highest regard, "They have an unparalleled battlefield reputation. British Gurkha officers and Gurkha soldiers have won 26 Victoria Crosses during an outstanding 205 years of military service with the British Crown. Even Norwegian Army officers and soldiers to whom I have given lectures on leadership during the Falklands War are aware of the Gurkhas and their abilities. A quote from Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* summarises their achievement perfectly, '100 victories in 100 battles is not the most skilful. Subduing the other's military without battle is the most skilful'."



MIKE SEEAR IS THE AUTHOR OF WITH THE GURKHAS IN THE FALKLANDS, WHICH IS PUBLISHED BY PEN & SWORD.
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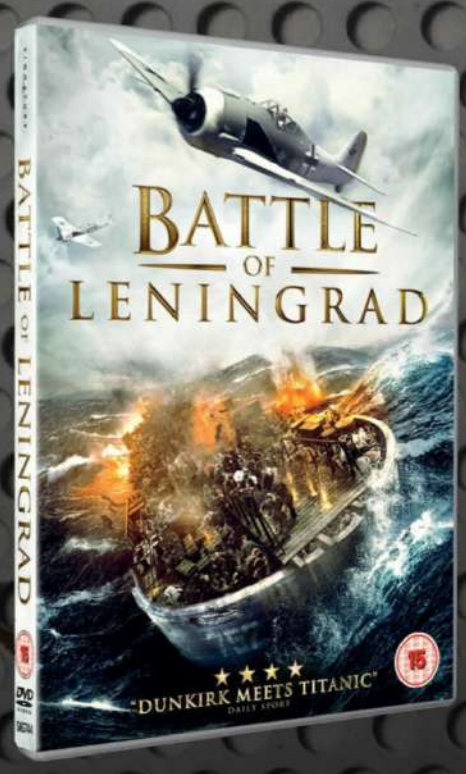

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The crusaders had very few warhorses at the time of the battle

Source: Wiki / CC / PD-Art

Great Battles

BATTLE OF ANTIOCH

After taking seven months to capture a Turkish garrison, the crusaders prepare to fend off a siege from a determined army led by Kerbogha, the atabeg of Mosul

WORDS **WILLIAM E WELSH**

OPPOSING FORCES

CRUSADERS

LEADER
Bohemond of Taranto

INFANTRY
14,800

CAVALRY
200

VS

SELJUK EMPIRE

LEADER
Kerbogha, Atabeg of Mosul

INFANTRY
2,000

LIGHT CAVALRY
35,000

HEAVY CAVALRY
3,000

All images: © Alamy

A mighty Seljuk Turkish army rode out of Mosul in Upper Mesopotamia in late spring 1098 on a mission to rescue a Turkish garrison besieged in the citadel of Antioch by an army of Latin crusaders from Western Europe. At its head rode Kerbogha, the grizzled, grey-bearded Seljuk governor of the great Mesopotamian city. Behind him rode thousands of white-robed bowmen and heavily armoured ghulam lancers. Black banners swayed over the long columns of horsemen as they rode west.

Yaghi-Siyan, the commander of the beleaguered Seljuk garrison that had retreated into Antioch's citadel, breathed a sigh of relief when word reached him that Kerbogha had declared a jihad against the Latin crusaders who'd fought their way into the city on 2 June. It had taken the crusaders seven months to capture Antioch. During that time, their numbers had dwindled considerably owing to skirmishing, disease and desertion.

Although approximately 100,000 men had responded to Pope Urban's call for a crusade in 1095 to liberate Jerusalem from the 'infidels', only half that number were soldiers. The calibre of those troops varied considerably: many of those from the lower strata of society had little military training, whereas those of wealth and prestige had been trained since a young age in the art of war. Of the 50,000 fighting men that set out across Anatolia, 5,000 were mounted knights.

The First Crusade was not led by a single commander-in-chief, but rather by a 'council of princes' who often disagreed on the best tactical approach to a situation. Each of the senior princes led an army recruited from his territory.

Four major armies from Western Europe formed the First Crusade. Counts Robert of Normandy, Robert of Flanders and Hugh of Vermandois led a Franco-Flemish army; Duke Godfrey of Lower Lorraine led a Lorraine-Burgundian army; Count Raymond of Toulouse and Adhemar of Le Puy led an Aquitanian-Provencal army; and Duke Bohemond of Taranto led an Italian Norman army. The most important junior leaders were Godfrey's younger brother Baldwin of Boulogne, and Bohemond's nephew Tancred. In order to reach Jerusalem, the crusaders had to fight their way through Anatolia, most of which was ruled by Seljuk Turks.

Kilij Arslan, who ruled the Sultanate of Rum branch of the Great Seljuk Turks, ambushed the vanguard of the crusader army at Dorylaeum with 6,000 horsemen on 1 July. Reinforced by the main body, the crusaders repulsed the Turks and continued their eastward trek. When the crusaders arrived at Antioch in October 1097, their numbers had been nearly cut in half.

At the time of the arrival of the crusader army the Great Seljuk Empire was in flux. The empire was growing increasingly decentralised and the Sunni Seljuks were losing ground in Palestine to their chief regional rivals, the Shiite Fatimid Dynasty of Egypt.

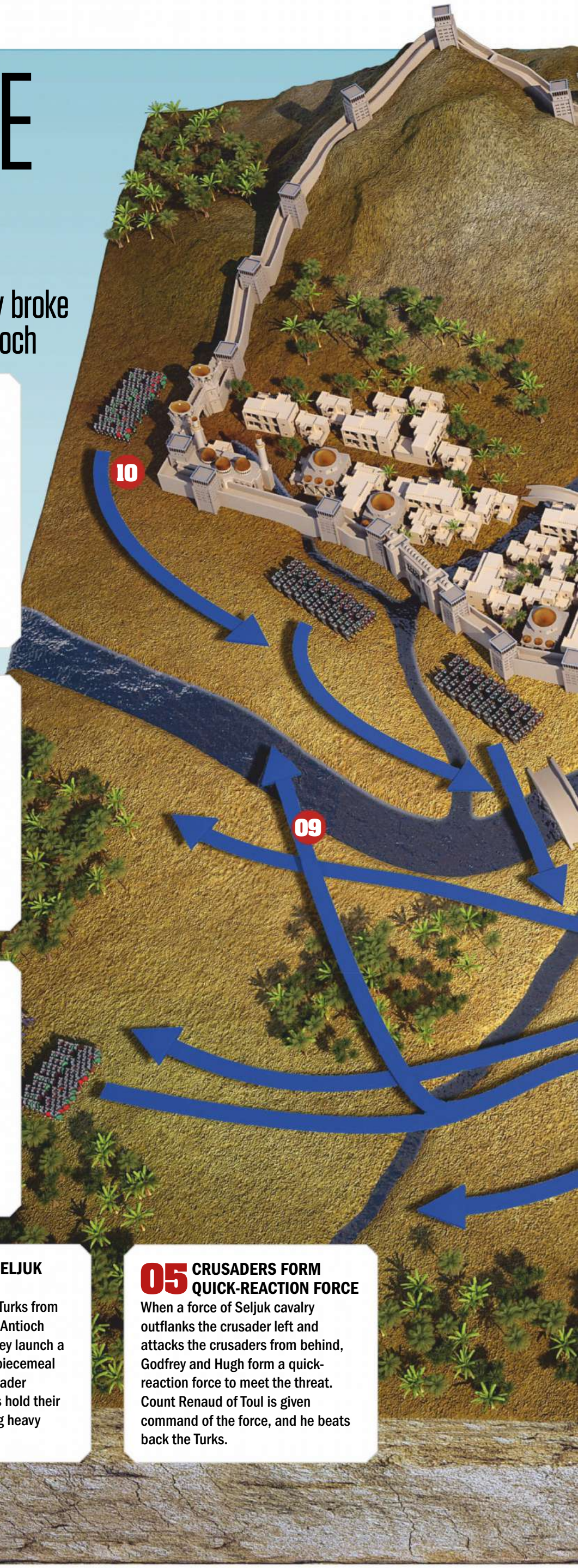
Yaghi-Siyan commanded a small Seljuk garrison that ruled the Greek and Armenian Christians of Antioch. The Byzantines had built Antioch's great stone walls in the 6th century. The Turks had taken Antioch in 1084 from a waning Byzantine Empire. The city's outer walls, which were studded with towers, enclosed an area three-and-a-half square miles in size that included pastures and orchards.

The crusaders knew they had to capture Antioch because it lay astride their line of communications to Constantinople. Two of the senior commanders, Count Raymond of Toulouse and Duke Bohemond of Taranto, had different strategies for capturing Antioch. Raymond favoured storming the walls, while Bohemond wanted to starve the Turks into submission. The latter approach was flawed given that the crusaders did not have enough men to completely surround the walled city, but Bohemond held sway and there was no immediate attack. As the weeks stretched into months, the crusaders skirmished not only with Yaghi-Siyan's troops, but also with local Muslim forces from Aleppo and Damascus. During this time the crusaders suffered from exposure to the elements and starvation.

Bohemond of Taranto was overly ambitious and self-serving but thanks to his strategic acumen he succeeded in capturing Antioch after a costly siege

28 JUNE 1098

How the crusader army broke the Seljuk siege of Antioch



01 TURKISH ARROW BARRAGE
Hugh of Vermandois' vanguard of Norman and Flemish troops emerges unopposed from the Bridge Gate on the west side of the city. A force of Seljuk light cavalry archers showers the crusaders with arrows. Holding their shields aloft to ward off the arrows, the crusaders scatter the Seljuk archers. They fight their way north as more crusaders emerge from the gate to reinforce them.

02 CLASH OF FOOT SOLDIERS
Count Robert of Normandy and Count Robert of Flanders lead a Franco-Flemish formation north to reinforce the advance guard. A force of Armenian archers and Syrian spearmen attacks them. Meanwhile, Godfrey of Bouillon leads his Lorraine and Burgundian troops into position in the centre of the crusader battle line.

03 CRUSADERS MARCH INTO THE PLAIN
Bishop Adhemar's division of southern French troops march into the plain. His formation anchors the crusader left flank. The Provencal troops present an inviting target to detachments of Seljuk horse archers joining the fight. The Seljuk horse archers swarm the Provencal troops and attack their closely packed ranks.

04 PIECEMEAL SELJUK CHARGES
Contingents of mounted Turks from various positions around Antioch arrive to join the fight. They launch a series of uncoordinated piecemeal assaults against the crusader battle line. The crusaders hold their position despite receiving heavy volleys of arrow fire.

05 CRUSADERS FORM QUICK-REACTION FORCE
When a force of Seljuk cavalry outflanks the crusader left and attacks the crusaders from behind, Godfrey and Hugh form a quick-reaction force to meet the threat. Count Renaud of Toul is given command of the force, and he beats back the Turks.

10 FLIGHT OF THE SELJUKS
Kerbogha flees in panic to save his own skin. He abandons everything to the crusaders, including his camp followers, foot soldiers, camp equipment, horses and camels, gold and silver. The Muslim garrison in the citadel surrenders when they realize they've been abandoned by the relief army.

09 DESTRUCTION OF THE SELJUK VANGUARD
The crusader army succeeds in routing the Turkish vanguard. The Turks set fire to the brush in an attempt to disorientate the crusaders. When it is apparent that the crusaders have crushed the Seljuk vanguard and overrun their positions, Kerbogha's confederated army dissolves. Duqaq of Damascus is the first to depart with his Syrian troops.

08 GARRISON SORTIE PREVENTED
Raymond of Aguilers, who is ill at the time of battle and unable to fight outside the city, supervises the investment of the Turkish garrison in the citadel to prevent it from conducting sorties.

07 SELJUKS' FINAL CHARGE
One of the few times the Muslims launched a coordinated assault occurs when emirs Qaradja of Harran and Duqaq of Damascus combine forces to attack Bohemond's large reserve division. Godfrey, who's engaged at the time against the forces of Emir Balduk of Samosata, receives an urgent request from Bohemond for assistance. Godfrey and Hugh both dispatch troops to assist Bohemond's hard- pressed southern Normans.

06 CRUSADER RESERVE DEPLOYS
Bohemond of Taranto's division, which is composed of Sicilian and Norman troops, serves as a reserve. Bohemond leads it into action when the Muslims waver. By this time, the crusaders appear to have gained the upper hand because Kerbogha still hasn't committed the bulk of his troops.

Latin princes led their army to victory over a divided Seljuk foe at Antioch

Owing to these factors, the crusader army continued to shrink in size.

In early spring 1098 Yaghi-Siyan had sent an urgent dispatch to Kerbogha, the Seljuk governor of Mosul, requesting a relief army large enough to drive off the enemy. The garrison was running low on provisions, so Yaghi-Siyan requested that the merchants who were hoarding grain give up half of their supply to the garrison commander. This rankled the wealthy merchants.

An Armenian officer and merchant named Firouz, a convert to Islam, believed that the edict threatened his family's livelihood. He turned over half of his grain begrudgingly. As an officer of the garrison, Firouz was responsible for guarding a section of the western wall. He was so embittered that he turned traitor. "He looked to his own salvation," wrote Norman chronicler Ralph of Caen. "He would avenge his injuries by betraying the whole city." One night Firouz snuck out of the city and met with Bohemond. When Firouz offered to let the Normans climb over his section of the wall under cover of darkness, Bohemond readily accepted the treacherous offer.

On the night of 2 June, Firouz allowed Bohemond's Normans to seize an unguarded tower in the western part of the city. Once inside, the raiders opened a secondary gate for the main crusader force to enter the city. In the early morning hours of 3 June the crusaders ran amuck through the city, indiscriminately slaughtering everyone they came across. The Turkish soldiers who survived the initial onslaught hastily withdrew to the citadel on Mount Silpius.

Kerbogha was a Mamluk slave soldier who governed Upper Mesopotamia on behalf of Seljuk Sultan Barkyaruk. He assembled 30,000 troops for the offensive. The Seljuk relief army set out in early May. En route to Antioch, Kerbogha besieged Edessa, which was held by Godfrey's younger brother, Baldwin of Boulogne. Baldwin had split off from the main army in eastern Anatolia, seeking to carve out a fiefdom for himself from the Armenian lands at the headwaters of the Euphrates River. After squandering three weeks in a poorly planned siege, Kerbogha resumed his march to Antioch.

As the Seljuk general marched through northern Syria, another 10,000 Turkish troops joined his ranks. Ironically, Kerbogha's army arrived on the plain outside the city on 4 June, the day after the crusaders had secured the city. He established his main camp three miles north of the city in the Orontes Valley.

Kerbogha's first order of business was to capture the crusader outposts outside the city. After three days, the Muslim advance guard had captured the outerworks, including the Tower of the Iron Bridge, and invested the city. Small detachments of Seljuk foot soldiers took up positions outside the city's main gates. "[The] Turks hemmed in our men by frequent and vigorous attacks," wrote French priest Fulcher of Chartres, who accompanied the crusaders.

After an unsuccessful attempt in mid-June to reinforce the garrison in the citadel, Kerbogha established forward positions beneath the northern and western walls of the city. Although the Seljuk relief army's initial efforts to retake the city had failed, time was not on the crusaders' side. They were at a distinct disadvantage given that they lacked sufficient provisions to endure a long siege. Morale was low, and some crusaders deserted over the walls and made their way to the port of St Symeon at the mouth of the Orontes in the hope of finding a ship home.

The priests accompanying the crusaders ministered to them to keep their morale up. Peter Bartholomew, a Provencal pilgrim, claimed to have received divine instruction from God of the existence of the Holy Lance — the point of which had pierced Christ's body while he was on the cross — telling him that it was buried

"IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF 3 JUNE THE CRUSADERS RAN AMOK THROUGH THE CITY, INDISCRIMINATELY SLAUGHTERING EVERYONE THEY CAME ACROSS"

Robert of Normandy helped lead the crusader vanguard

BATTLE OF ANTIOCH

The crusaders used the Holy Lance as their battle standard at Antioch

beneath the Cathedral of St Peter Bartholomew and some other volunteers excavated the floor of the cathedral in search of the relic.

On 14 June Peter produced an iron tip that he claimed was from the actual Holy Lance. Bishop Adhemar, the papal legate accompanying the crusaders, was deeply sceptical of the finding because he knew the Holy Lance was stored in Constantinople. Nevertheless, he played along with Peter for the good of the army's morale. Peter's alleged discovery of the Holy Lance produced the desired improvement in crusader morale. The crusaders wrapped the Holy Lance in rich brocade, with a plan to make it their standard and carry it into battle.

The council of princes knew that the army could not withstand a siege. For that reason, they decided to emerge from the city and offer battle. Raymond, the de facto leader at that point in the crusade, was bedridden, though, so command devolved to Bohemond. Raymond directed a detachment that had orders to prevent the Seljuk garrison in the citadel from sallying forth to help Kerbogah retake the city.

On the morning of 28 June, the crusaders emerged from the Bridge Gate in the west wall overlooking the River Orontes. Inviting Kerbogha's host to fight a pitched battle was a major gamble, but the crusaders believed it was their best chance given the dire supply situation they faced.

The crusaders did not have enough warhorses to mount charges, though. Instead, the nobles in command of the divisions distributed the 200 mounted knights evenly across the divisions. This gave each of the six divisions 30 to 35 horses. The mounted knights in each division were dispersed among the ranks to serve as rallying points for the dismounted knights, spearmen, crossbowmen and archers. The knights on horseback were armed with lances, and the dismounted knights wielded broad-bladed spears, axes and maces. All knights had swords as backup weapons.

Count Hugh of Vermandois' northern French troops emerged from the Bridge Gate under heavy fire from a large group of Muslim foot archers. They drove the archers north, which gave room for three more divisions to emerge and deploy facing Kerbogha's vanguard.

Kerbogha was taken completely by surprise when the crusaders marched out of the city because he thought they were too few in numbers to offer battle. The bulk of his army was still at the main camp three miles north of the city. Despite the insistence of some of the Seljuk princes that he destroy the crusader vanguard and assemble all of his troops for battle, Kerbogha told them that he would wait for the entire crusader army to deploy before mounting his attack. "Wait until they have all come out and then we will kill them," he's alleged to have said.

After a short period of time, the Seljuk detachments stationed around the city began to engage the crusader divisions. Whether this was done by Kerbogha's orders or on their own initiative is unclear. The crusaders succeeded in parrying all of the piecemeal attacks. Even as the tide of battle turned in favour of the crusaders, Kerbogah still did not call for reinforcements from his camp.

Bishop Adhemer, who led a division of southern French on the crusader left flank, switched over to the attack after deflecting several Muslim charges. He smashed the right flank of the Seljuk vanguard. Fearing that they were about to be encircled and carved up, the remaining members of Kerbogha's vanguard lost their will to fight.

With the bulk of his Seljuk troops still at their base camp, Kerbogah fled the field to save his own hide. The crusaders swept past the northern end of the city and overran Kerbogha's camp. They slew the surviving foot soldiers and camp followers who had no way to escape. Shortly afterwards, the Turks in the citadel surrendered.

Kerbogha's most glaring tactical error was his failure to assemble all of his troops for battle as the crusaders began emerging from the city. In contrast to Kerbogha's incompetence, the senior commanders of the crusader army exhibited superb tactical control during the battle. The division commanders fought in a coordinated fashion to defeat each of the incoming charges.

The crusaders stayed at Antioch for the next five months, building their strength for the final leg of their march. They set out in January for Jerusalem. This time they took great pains to avoid lengthy sieges, and the crusade ended in success when they captured Jerusalem on 15 July 1099.

Heroes of the Medal of Honor

JOSHUA CHAMBERLAIN

This inexperienced officer fended off a Confederacy assault at Little Round Top, during the Battle of Gettysburg

WORDS: **TIM WILLIAMSON**

Distant artillery fire breaks through the summer's day from the south, alerting the weary men of the Union Army's Fifth Corps to a fresh assault in some other corner of the field. They have marched relentlessly throughout the night and most of the day to gather here, just south of the small town of Gettysburg, for what they know will be one of the largest engagements of the war so far.

The Fifth Corps was initially placed behind the right flank of the Union line, but had been repositioned all day as the two opposing armies gather for battle. A mixture of anticipation, sheer fatigue and fear is etched on every face as the order to move off comes once again. Though just as weary as the men of the 20th Maine regiment, Lieutenant Colonel Joshua Chamberlain presents a determined front as he mounts and joins the march south across fields toward the extreme left of the Union line. He knows the vital importance of defeating this Confederate invasion of the North and will do everything in his power to help defeat the Southern rebel states.

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Just a year earlier, Chamberlain could not have foreseen how he would suddenly be thrust in the middle of the most crucial battle of the war so far. He had no military experience, but had always been a quick learner and could speak a dozen languages. By the age of 27, he became a professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin College, teaching Latin, Hebrew, Arabic and Syriac among other subjects. Deciding he could just as easily turn his hand to soldiering, and wanting to contribute to the war effort, he requested leave from the college before signing up for active duty. The 20th Maine regiment had been formed in the very same year Chamberlain left his quiet college job, in 1862, when President Abraham Lincoln had sent out a second call for volunteers to help him win the war.

Though his new regiment numbered some 1,500 men when it left Maine to campaign against the rebels, its future seemed far from

***Left:** The 20th Maine grew famous after the battle and Chamberlain became a hero in his home state of Maine, where he served several times as its governor. But conflicting accounts from other officers have caused controversy regarding the day's events*

“IT WAS IMPERATIVE TO STRIKE BEFORE WE WERE STRUCK BY THIS OVERWHELMING FORCE IN A HAND-TO-HAND FIGHT, WHICH WE COULD NOT PROBABLY HAVE WITHSTOOD OR SURVIVED. AT THAT CRISIS, I ORDERED THE BAYONET. THE WORD WAS ENOUGH”

Joshua Chamberlain recounting the battle

Chamberlain’s citation refers to ‘extraordinary heroism’ and ‘great tenacity in holding his position on Little Round Top against repeated enemy assaults

Source: Wiki / PD

auspicious. Being one of the later regiments to be commissioned from the state, its ranks were largely filled with extras from other outfits, castoffs, stragglers and youths. With Chamberlain at its head, himself no more than an enthusiastic theologian and scholar, rather than a promising West Point Military Academy graduate, it was clear no grand deeds were expected of these men from Maine.

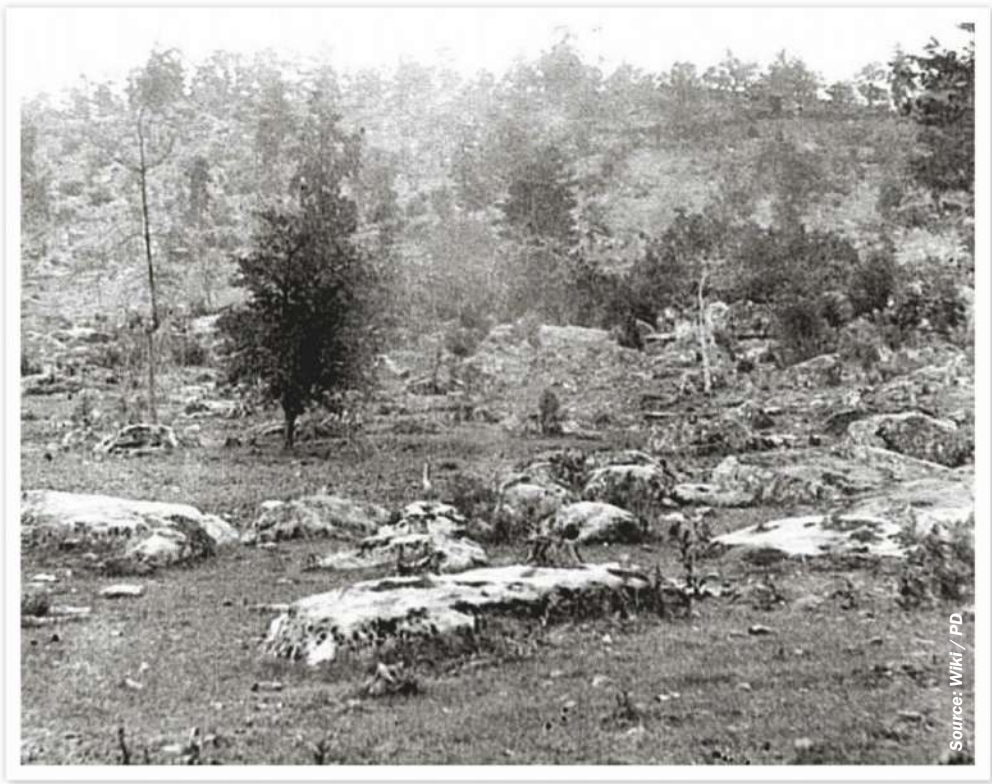
As they marched across the fields at Gettysburg, their numbers were dramatically smaller than a year ago, at just under 370 – a year of hard-fought campaigns having taken their toll. However, Chamberlain's even-handed leadership had shone through in that time. Not two months previous, 120 soldiers from another regiment accused of mutiny were marched under guard and handed over to join the 20th Maine, or be shot. The veterans had argued they should have been allowed to leave when their original regiment, the 2nd Maine, had returned home. Instead, they were sent straight to Chamberlain's beleaguered 20th. Rather than treating them in the harsh manner dictated by his superiors, Chamberlain embraced his fellow Mainers and smartly incorporated them into his companies, looking to use their experience to help support his regiment.

The position the Fifth Corps occupied, Little Round Top, was the northernmost of two large hills, with higher Big Round Top close by to the southwest, from where the rebel Alabama and Texas regiments were advancing. As Chamberlain's regiment climbed the slope of the west-facing side of Little Round Top, the sound of Confederate artillery began to intensify, forming a thunderous prelude to the imminent attack on the Union left. Without a thick cover of trees to hide behind on Little Round Top, the position was open and exposed.

As the Maine men moved into position on the extreme left of the line, Chamberlain's youthful commanding officer Colonel Strong Vincent left him a simple but firm order, "You will hold this ground at all hazards!" The weight of these words weren't lost on either man – both recognised that the end of this little hill marked the end of the army's battle line, and it was the job of the 20th to defend it against far superior numbers, whatever the cost. The afternoon was destined to be long and bloody.

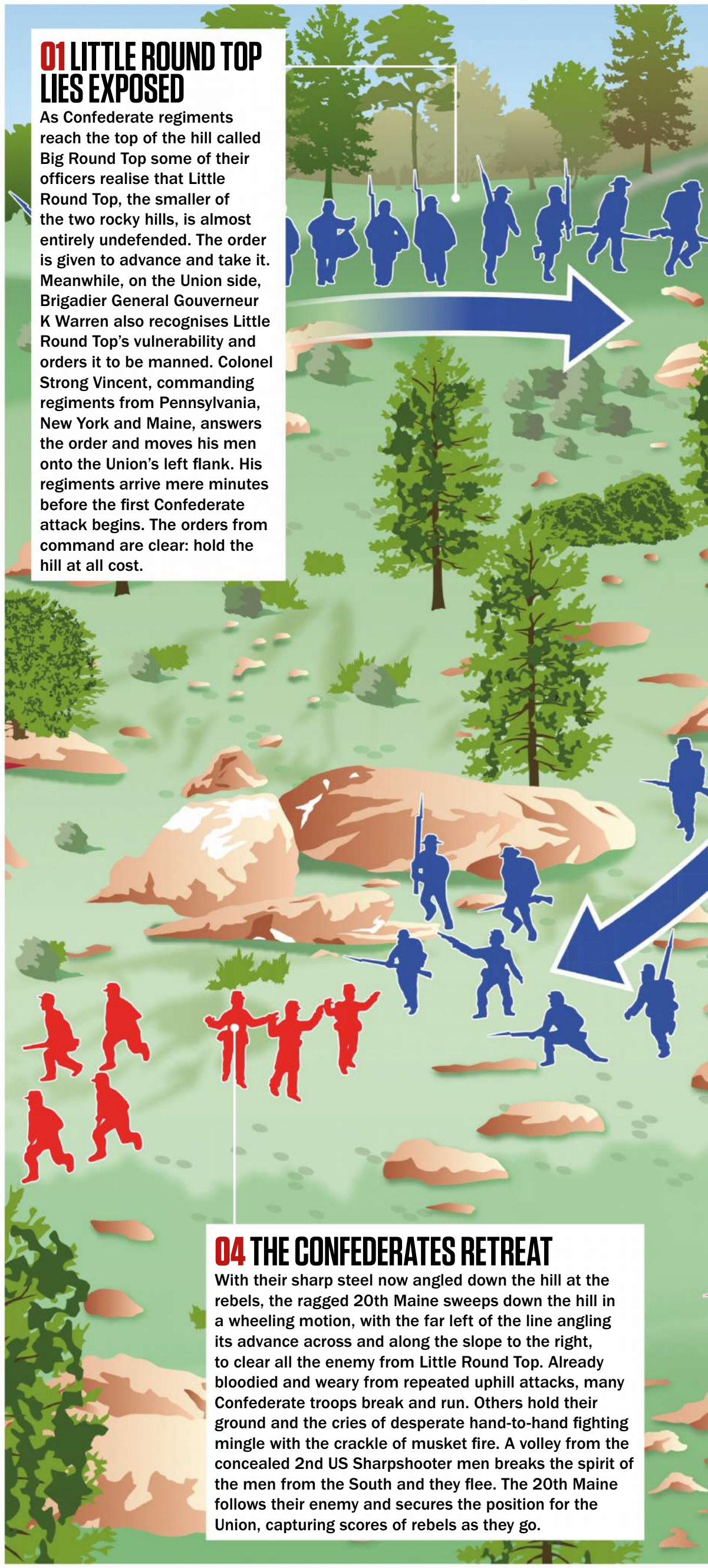
THE AFTERMATH

The Battle of Gettysburg is viewed as a key turning point in the American Civil War, with Robert E. Lee's Army of Northern Virginia defeated in the field, though not annihilated. Shortly after, President Abraham Lincoln gave arguably his most famous speech, The Gettysburg Address, which is still today enshrined in American culture. The Confederate invasion of the North had been stopped, but the war would drag on a further two years. Chamberlain was given a brigade after Gettysburg and was wounded six times in various battles. After the war, he returned to Maine as a conquering hero, with fresh popularity and acclaim. He stood as the state's governor several times and later wrote his memoirs on the war.



Source: Wiki / PD

***Below:** The scene of the fateful skirmish on Little Round Top*



01 LITTLE ROUND TOP LIES EXPOSED

As Confederate regiments reach the top of the hill called Big Round Top some of their officers realise that Little Round Top, the smaller of the two rocky hills, is almost entirely undefended. The order is given to advance and take it. Meanwhile, on the Union side, Brigadier General Gouverneur K Warren also recognises Little Round Top's vulnerability and orders it to be manned. Colonel Strong Vincent, commanding regiments from Pennsylvania, New York and Maine, answers the order and moves his men onto the Union's left flank. His regiments arrive mere minutes before the first Confederate attack begins. The orders from command are clear: hold the hill at all cost.

04 THE CONFEDERATES RETREAT

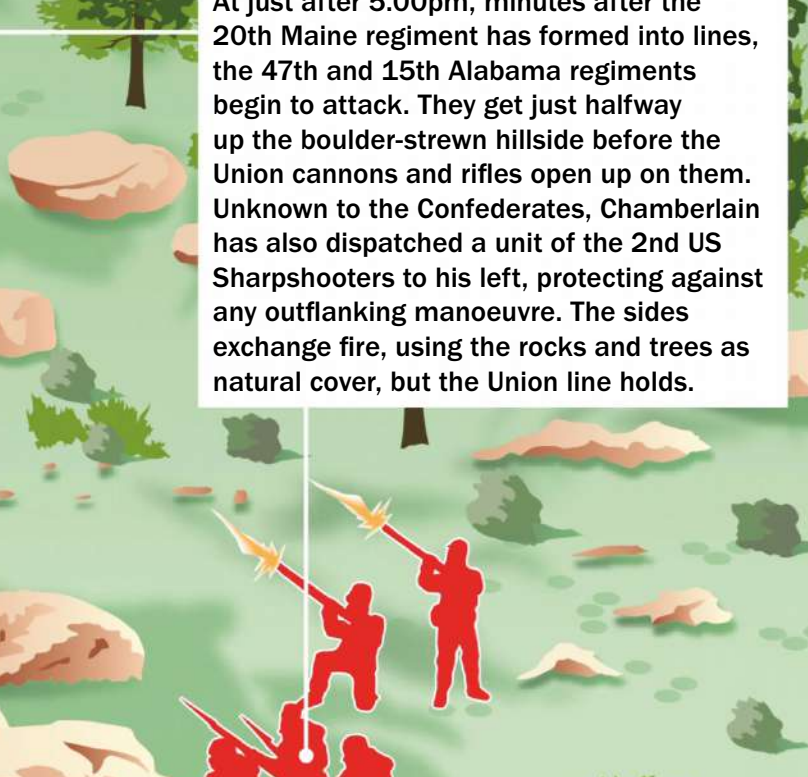
With their sharp steel now angled down the hill at the rebels, the ragged 20th Maine sweeps down the hill in a wheeling motion, with the far left of the line angling its advance across and along the slope to the right, to clear all the enemy from Little Round Top. Already bloodied and weary from repeated uphill attacks, many Confederate troops break and run. Others hold their ground and the cries of desperate hand-to-hand fighting mingle with the crackle of musket fire. A volley from the concealed 2nd US Sharpshooter men breaks the spirit of the men from the South and they flee. The 20th Maine follows their enemy and secures the position for the Union, capturing scores of rebels as they go.

03 THE 20TH MAINE CHARGES

After nearly two hours of fighting, repulsing three successive enemy attacks, those Maine soldiers still able to fight are running dangerously low on ammunition. Pacing up and down his own line of exhausted men, Chamberlain knows desperate measures are called for. The 20th Maine has lost nearly a third of its force, as a mere 200 men now stand in line, many preparing to use their empty rifles as clubs. Chamberlain gives the command, “Bayonets!” The call is taken up in a crescendo along the line, before Chamberlain draws his sword and advances, with the regiment colours at his side, down the hill toward the rebel forces.

02 THE CONFEDERATES ATTACK

At just after 5.00pm, minutes after the 20th Maine regiment has formed into lines, the 47th and 15th Alabama regiments begin to attack. They get just halfway up the boulder-strewn hillside before the Union cannons and rifles open up on them. Unknown to the Confederates, Chamberlain has also dispatched a unit of the 2nd US Sharpshooters to his left, protecting against any outflanking manoeuvre. The sides exchange fire, using the rocks and trees as natural cover, but the Union line holds.



Stephen the Great's battle flag featured Saint George slaying the dragon

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STEPHEN THE GREAT

This master of the ambush weathered repeated invasions in the late 15th century, in a quest to maintain an independent principality

WORDS **WILLIAM E. WELSH**

In 1497 Prince Stephen 'the Great' of Moldavia's most trusted ally turned against him. In the four decades he had ruled the Danubian principality, the Poles had steadfastly stood behind Stephen when he was assailed first by Catholic Hungarians, hoping to recover what they believed were their lands and then by the Muslim Ottoman Turks fanning out in the Balkans.

Showing great disregard for his predecessor King Casimir IV's guardian-like relationship with Stephen, Polish King John Albert had in the final decade of the 15th century negotiated with the Sublime Porte over Moldavia's territories with scant regard for past precedent as it related to Moldavia. When John Albert entered into a treaty with the Ottomans and confirmed that the Moldavian ports of Chilia and Cetatea Alba, which the Turks had seized by force in 1484, rightfully belonged to the Turks, Stephen was furious. In his eyes, the Polish King's decision was an affront that violated the northern kingdom's longstanding commitment to protect Moldavian lands.

John Albert assembled 80,000 troops and a long supply train for his campaign against the principality. Marching in the ranks were Poles, Lithuanians, Teutonic Knights and Czechs. In September the Poles besieged Suceava. If the Poles were victorious in securing the Moldavian capital, Stephen might be led away in chains to Cracow or even executed. The future of Moldavia and its celebrated prince was frighteningly grim.

The usurper

The principality that Stephen ruled on the hilly plateau between the Carpathian Mountains and the Nistru River came into existence in the mid-14th century. At odds with the Hungarian crown, Bogdan, a local ruler of the Vlachs in the southeastern corner of the kingdom, led his people in 1359 across the Carpathians and founded the principality of Moldavia.

As the years passed, the Ottoman Sultanate to the south increasingly threatened Moldavian sovereignty. Sultan Mehmed II's successful siege of Byzantine-controlled Constantinople in 1453 freed up resources that enabled him to expand into southeastern Europe. Just three years after the fall of Constantinople, Mehmed coerced Moldavian Prince Peter III Aron to begin paying an annual tribute of 2,000 gold ducats to the Sublime Porte.

In 1451 Prince Peter had murdered his brother, Bogdan II, in order to obtain the Moldavian throne. Bogdan's son, Stephen, was determined to oust his uncle. With the assistance of his cousin, Vlad Tepes, of the neighbouring Danubian principality of Wallachia, Stephen assembled a large peasant army. In April 1457 Stephen defeated Peter's royal army in two pitched battles, driving his rival into exile in Transylvania. Afterwards, the head of the Moldavian Orthodox Church anointed Stephen as Moldavia's new ruler.

Stephen's first major political move was to rescind the annual tribute to the Sublime Porte. Sultan Mehmed could not let this go unanswered. He threatened to invade Moldavia unless the headstrong Moldavian prince reinstituted the annual payment.

One of the most pressing problems facing Stephen was securing strongholds located at the mouths of the Danube and Nistru rivers on the western coast of the Black Sea. The fortified port of Chilia was situated in the Danube delta, and the fortress of Cetatea Alba was located 140 kilometres to the north at the mouth of the Nistru. The Hungarians had controlled Chilia since 1448.

In summer 1462 Stephen made the first of two concerted attempts to capture Chilia. His first attempt failed when Vlad Tepes, who had realigned himself with the Hungarians, marched to the relief of the garrison with a large Wallachian army. Stephen captured Chilia three years later with relatively little bloodshed when the garrison surrendered after Casimir IV interceded with Hungary on behalf of the Moldavians.

Hungarian wrath

In retaliation against Hungary, the Moldavian prince took steps to stir up resentment for the Hungarian crown in Wallachia and Transylvania. Angered by the loss of Chilia, the unrest in Transylvania and Stephen's budding alliance with Poland, Hungarian King Matthias Corvinus resolved to use military force to reinstall Peter Aron on the Moldavian throne and transform the principality into a Hungarian fief. In December 1467, Matthias led 20,000 Hungarian soldiers into Moldavia. The Hungarian king occupied the strategic town of Baia and fortified it in anticipation of a counter-attack from Stephen's army, which was encamped in a nearby forest.

Stephen's intimate knowledge of the mountains, valleys and forests of Moldavia gave him a considerable advantage over foreign invaders. He led his 12,000 troops in a series of spirited assaults on the Hungarian defences on 15 December. Dismounted Moldavian boyars and spearmen stormed the earthen palisades while sappers set fire to the thatch houses.

"Many of the Hungarians [fell or were] consumed in the flames," wrote Polish chronicler Jan Dlugosz. "King Matthias, thrice wounded, [had]to be carried from the battlefield on a stretcher, to avoid him falling into the hands of the enemy." The Hungarians withdrew in defeat.

Avenging the dead

The Tatars of the Golden Horde launched a major raid into Moldavia in 1270 to plunder churches, towns and villages. As they withdrew with riches, livestock and slaves, Stephen sprang an ambush on them at Lipnic before they reached the Nistru. He not only inflicted heavy losses on the Tatars, but also captured the son of their leader, Ahmed Khan.

The khan sent threatening messages to Stephen demanding the return of his son. "But Stephen, a man with an amiable soul, angered by that message, which could easily have scared other men, disregarding [the khan's] threats, cut his son into four pieces in front of the heralds, impaled all the heralds except one, who, having his nose cut off, was sent [home] to inform him of what happened," wrote Dlugosz. "This is how Stephen avenged the shadows of his dead."

In the years immediately following the Battle of Lipnic, Stephen ordered the construction of new fortresses at Soroca in northern Moldavia and Orhei in central Moldavia to serve as bulwarks against the opportunistic Tatars.

Stephen the Great, at right, leads his troops into battle against the Turks in a patriotic sculpture

© Alamy

Ottoman menace

In 1473, Stephen decided to intervene in Wallachian politics. To ensure that the Wallachians did not interfere in Moldavian affairs, he unseated Prince Radu III, who had succeeded Vlad Tepes, replacing him with his own pawn. Stephen's overt violation of Wallachian sovereignty infuriated Sultan Mehmed II given that the Ottoman Sultanate had served as the suzerain of Wallachia since the early 15th century. The following year the Ottoman sultan demanded that Stephen reinstitute tribute payments to the Sublime Porte, and also cede Chilia to the Porte. Mehmed threatened to invade Moldavia unless Stephen submitted to his demands. Stephen was not intimidated by the threats and refused.

Knowing that the sultan would assemble an army that would dwarf his own, Stephen beseeched Pope Sixtus IV and fellow Latin rulers to participate with the Moldavians in a crusade against the Ottomans. Neither the Pope nor any of the Christian kings were willing to launch a new crusade. Previous crusades against the Turks had ended in complete disaster. Sultan Bayezid I had crushed a Franco-Hungarian army at Nicopolis in 1396, and Sultan Murad II had soundly defeated a Polish-Hungarian army at Varna in 1444.

Surprise attack

Grand Vizier Hadim Suleiman Pasha led a 50,000-strong Ottoman army north into Moldavia in December 1474. At last realising the severity of the situation, the kings of Hungary and Poland sent reinforcements. Stephen was sent 5,000 Transylvanian troops and 2,000 Polish troops, with which to face the sultan's veteran soldiers. Stephen began a scorched-earth strategy in lower Moldavia to deny forage to the Turks.

Stephen erected many fortresses, such as this one at Bilhorod-Dnistrovskyi in the Odessa region of southwestern Ukraine, to defend his people against Tatars and Turks

Source: Wiki / PD / Masinto

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STEPHEN OF MOLDAVIA

Prince Stephen ‘the Great’ of Moldavia’s sword blade likely was made in Germany, but the Cyrillic engraving on the hilt and pommel was produced locally. Stephen rose to power in an age when the rapidly expanding Ottoman Empire posed a crushing threat to Moldavian independence. A superb leader of men in battle, he evened the odds with invading armies by ambushing them in hostile terrain. During his 47-year reign, he won extraordinary victories over Hungarian, Polish, Turkish and Tatar invaders. He succeeded for three decades in maintaining Moldavia as an independent principality.

King Stephen III of Moldavia

Romanian Prime Minister Adrian Nastase with a replica of Stephen’s sword

© Getty

STEPHEN THE GREAT

Stephen leads his army in defence of the Moldavian capital of Suceava

© Alamy

Statue of Stephen the Great, in Moldavia, Romania

© Getty

The Ottomans had the bad fortune to invade Moldavia during an unusually severe winter. Stephen's Fabian approach worked well, and the Turks eventually depleted their supplies.

As the Ottoman army approached the town of Vaslui on the mist-shrouded morning of 10 January 1475, Stephen's well-hidden troops emerged from a forested hill to the northeast. His fresh troops crashed into the Ottoman right flank. Turkish cohesion disintegrated in the face of the surprise attack. Those who fled were hunted down and slain. The victorious Moldavians captured 100 Ottoman standards. Stephen sent bundles of standards to King Matthias, King Casimir and Pope Sixtus IV to celebrate his decisive victory.

Mehmed planned a coordinated Tatar-Ottoman invasion for the following year. While the Tatars assailed Moldavia from the east, the sultan would lead a streamlined invasion force that would march against Stephen's capital at Suceava. Stephen soundly defeated the Tatars in two separate battles in the new campaign, but was defeated by the sultan in a hard-fought battle on 26 July 1476 at Valea Alba, 90 kilometres south of Suceava.

Stephen had appealed to the Hungarian crown for reinforcements. When Mehmed learned that a large Transylvanian relief army had entered Moldavia, he withdrew without capturing Suceava. When Mehmed died five years later, his successor, Sultan Bayezid II, inherited the unfinished business involving Moldavia.

Continual fighting

Stephen's continued interference in Wallachian politics and the raids he launched into Ottoman Bulgaria, prompted Bayezid to assemble an army to subjugate the Moldavians once and for all. After coordinating plans with the Tatars and Wallachians, Bayezid invaded Moldavia in summer 1484. The Turks captured Chilia and Cetatea Alba, respectively, in July and August. This gave the Turks control of the entire Black Sea littoral and transformed Moldavia into a landlocked principality. Bayezid also succeeded in capturing the Moldavian capital of Suceava.

To get the Turks to withdraw from his territory, Stephen agreed to become an Ottoman vassal. The Turks withdrew, but left strong garrisons in the ports they captured. Stephen later repudiated his agreement with the sultan.

In a strategic ploy designed to counter Ottoman dominance of Moldavia, Stephen voluntarily accepted King Casimir IV of Poland as his suzerain in 1485. Stephen also conducted two separate campaigns to try to retake the fortresses on the Moldavian coastline, but the Turks soundly repulsed both attempts.

At that point, Stephen believed he had no other choice but to make terms with the sultan. He agreed in 1489 to pay an annual tribute of 3,000 gold ducats to the Porte, as well as officially cede the ports of Chilia and Cetatea Alba to the Turks. In return, the Ottomans agreed not to interfere in the political and religious affairs of Moldavia.

Final battle

When Polish King John Albert marched south with 80,000 soldiers in 1497 ostensibly to fight the Turks, he was suddenly bitten by the urge to forcibly reassert Polish suzerainity over Moldavia.

After failing to capture Suceava in October, the Polish king decided to return to Poland with his army. Stephen, who had approximately 10,000 troops, followed the Poles and ambushed them in Cosmin Forest, which lay 80 kilometres north of Suceava on the Polish frontier.

The Polish king had placed his slow-moving carts under heavy guard in the front of his army. The rest of the Polish troops, including the king and his bodyguards followed in the main body, and the Teutonic Knights and other mercenaries trailed in the rearguard.

Stephen's troops, who lay hidden in the wooded hills of the Cosmin Forest waiting for the Poles to enter a narrow defile, struck both the vanguard and rearguard. They destroyed the vanguard, but most of the troops in the rearguard fought their way out and fled north.

John Albert established a fortified camp in the woods to fend off a fresh Moldavian assault, but it never came about. Stephen withdrew, having slain 5,000 of the enemy while suffering light casualties.

The Poles resumed their retreat and Stephen had proved that he still had plenty of fight left within him. He died in 1504 after ruling Moldavia for 47 years, longer than any other Moldavian prince. His years of vanquishing foreign invaders so endeared him to his people that they ultimately bestowed upon him the sobriquet of 'the great'.

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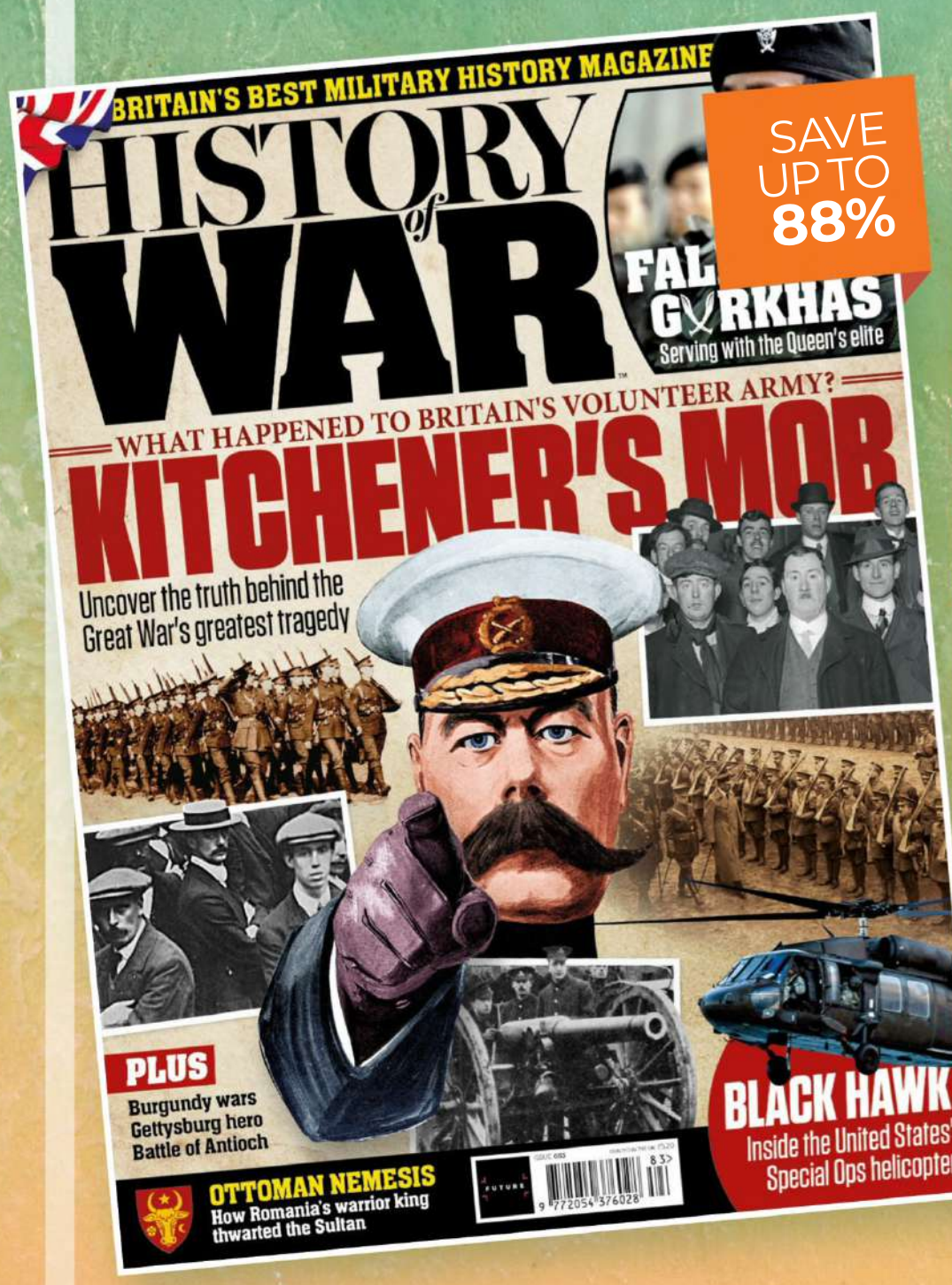

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Operator's Handbook

SIKORSKY MH-60 BLACK HAWK

WEAPONS
Two electrically powered M-134 miniguns, capable of firing a combined 12,000 rounds per minute, can be mounted inside the aircraft.

Designed for special operations in hostile environments, this was a new kind of war machine, built for a new kind of battlefield

For over 40 years, Black Hawk helicopters have been among the deadliest, most effective tools available to modern militaries. After its experiences in the Vietnam War in the 1960s and '70s, the US military knew just how essential it was to have tough, multi-role helicopters available. Not only were these aircraft useful for rapidly transporting combat personnel to and from battlefields, they could even remain on the front line to provide direct support. However, the existing Huey helicopters were now out of date.

Two US companies, Boeing Vertol and Sikorsky, went head-to-head with their rival designs for the new combat helicopter, with the latter finally winning the contract with its S-70 prototype. Since the model first took to the skies in 1974, a huge number of variants have gone into production, each one with its own specific role to play in a combat zone. For instance, the secretive MH-X version – used during the mission to kill Al-Qaeda's chief – was rumoured to be equipped with stealth technology, making it almost undetectable.

The MH-60 variant was developed from the standard UH-60 Black Hawk for use during special operations. The machine's effective range was greatly increased thanks to the addition of a much more efficient fuel tank, the installation of systems to enable aerial refuelling, and the improvement of the helicopter's overall survivability.

SIKORSKY MH-60 BLACK HAWK

COMMISSIONED:	1978
ORIGIN:	USA
RANGE:	2,200 KM (1,367 MILES)
ENGINES:	TWIN GENERAL ELECTRIC T700-GE-701C 1,940 SHAFT HORSEPOWER
CREW:	2
PRIMARY WEAPON:	2X MOUNTED M134 MINIGUNS

TWIN ENGINES

Two General Electric engines provide 3,880 shaft horsepower, enabling the aircraft to reach a top speed of 280km/h.

PASSENGERS

Up to 11 personnel can be transported in the rear of the aircraft, which has an operational range of over 2,200km.

"THE MH-60 VARIANT WAS DEVELOPED FROM THE STANDARD UH-60 BLACK HAWK FOR USE DURING SPECIAL OPERATIONS"

RADAR

As well as GPS capability, the MH-60 is fitted with multi-mode radar capable of tracking the terrain below, even in poor weather conditions.

© Alamy

***Above:** A US Army UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter with the 25th Combat Aviation Brigade*

Illustration: Alex Pang

Black Hawk helicopter, notice the infra-red (FLIR) video camera pod on the front

© Alamy

DESIGN

Modifications to the aircraft for special operations include a forward-facing infra-red (FLIR) video camera pod. This captures the surrounding environment and relays it to the pilot, enabling safe flight in total darkness. The fuel tank, landing gear and body frame are all reinforced, greatly increasing survivability. Even the pilots' seats are designed to absorb and nullify any critical impact. Many iterations, such as the MH-60G Pave Hawk, also feature an in-flight refuelling probe, to greatly extend the aircraft's operational flight time.

Marines from the Force Reconnaissance Platoon of the 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit, are extracted by an MH-60 Black Hawk helicopter

An MH-60 Black Hawk with the 160th Special Operations Aviation Regiment

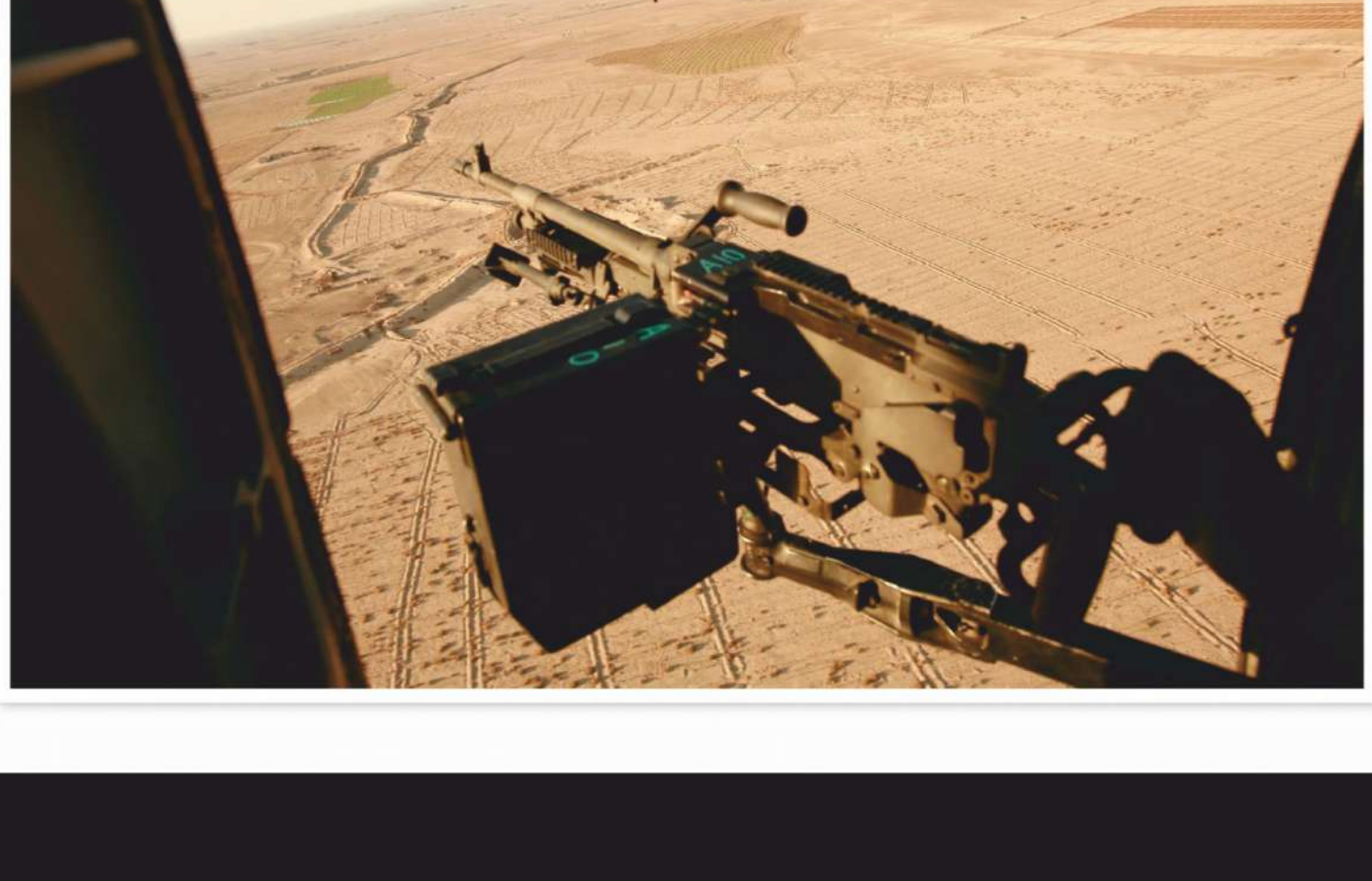
Source: Wiki / PD-Gov

"THE FUEL TANK, LANDING GEAR AND BODY FRAME ARE ALL REINFORCED, GREATLY INCREASING SURVIVABILITY"

Source: Wiki / PD-Gov

A UH-60M Black Hawk helicopter of US Army Europe

© Alamy



A machine-gun mounted on Black Hawk helicopter

© Getty

ARMAMENT

The original Black Hawk specification was for a utility, multi-mission helicopter, and they can be fitted with an array of weapons systems to suit mission requirements. The Black Hawk's hardpoint 'stub wings' can be mounted with Hellfire missiles, rocket pods, GAU-19 gatling guns, M-134 miniguns, as well as additional fuel tanks for long-haul missions. Where hardpoints are not required, crew-operated, door-mounted 7.62mm or .50-calibre machine-guns are installed to provide supporting fire, or other mission-specific functions.

Inside the cockpit of an HH-60

Source: Wiki / PD / Tim Felce (Airwolfhound)

CABIN AND COCKPIT

The pilot and co-pilot share a reinforced compartment, from where they operate and monitor integrated flight and weapons systems, including the FLIR video camera pod for use during low-visibility conditions or night flying. The UH-60M also features an integrated vehicle health management system, which gathers and displays data on status and performance. The cabin to the rear of the cockpit is capable of carrying up to 11 personnel, for the purposes of troop infiltration and exfiltration via sliding cargo doors. There is also space for stretchers in order to conduct MEDEVAC missions.

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

US Special Forces (USSF) Soldiers scan the ground below for threats while on a MH-60 Black Hawk

Source: Wiki / PD / CC

ENGINE

The General Electrics T700-GE-701C turboshaft engine also powers the H-60 Seahawk for the US Navy, as well as the AH-64 Apache and a range of civilian aircraft. Later iterations of the H-60 series upgraded to T700-GE-701D engine, providing a combined 4,000 shaft horsepower, and the capacity to haul up to 9,979 kg (22,000 lbs) of mission weight. The reliability and high performance of these engines were ideal for the requirements and challenges of special operations as well as MEDEVAC roles.

***Left:** US Army Captain Andrew Wagner inspects the engine of a UH-60*

The wreckage of an American helicopter sits 14 October 1993 in Mogadishu, Somalia after being shot down by Somali warlords

© Getty

SERVICE HISTORY

From its introduction in the late 1970s, Black Hawks have been deployed by the US Army in the invasion of Grenada in 1983, the invasion of Panama in 1989 and during the First Gulf War in 1990-91. The MH-60 is most often associated with the Battle of Mogadishu. On 3 October 1993, two Black Hawks came under fire, crash-landing into the maze of streets and alleyways below. The battle, and the subsequent 2001 Oscar-winning film *Black Hawk Down*, gained the helicopter worldwide recognition. By 2009, the H-60 series had logged one million flight hours with the US Army. In 2011, modified Black Hawks were used by SEAL teams during Operation Neptune Spear, the mission to kill Osama Bin Laden. During this operation one of the vehicles crash-landed and was subsequently destroyed to protect its secret modifications. Over 4,000 Black Hawks of all variants have been produced and to date continue to serve in the US and 30 other countries in a range of combat and domestic roles.

A UH-60A Black Hawk helicopter flies over a small village in the Kurdish occupied security zone in northern Iraq

Source: Wiki / PD Gov

"MODIFIED BLACK HAWKS WERE USED BY SEAL TEAMS DURING OPERATION NEPTUNE SPEAR, THE MISSION TO KILL OSAMA BIN LADEN"

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80 years ago this month, the Royal Navy opened fire on the French Fleet, to prevent it falling into Nazi hands

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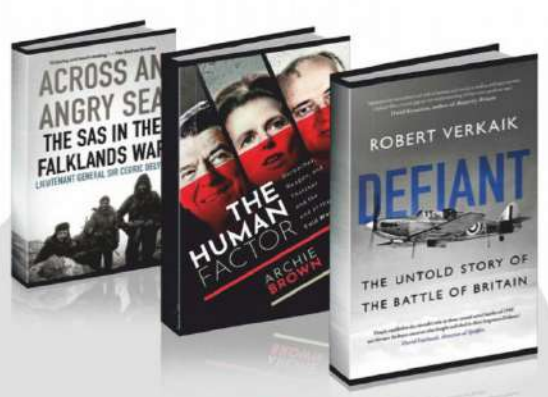
Q&A with author and historian Julie Summers



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The latest films and books on your screens and shelves

MUSEUMS & EVENTS

Commemorate the end of WWII with the IWM, take a virtual tour around Anne Frank's hiding place and discover Cumbria's military past through slideshows and activities

Images: Imperial War Museum

VICTORY IN AUDIO

The Imperial War Museum has delved into its huge audio and artistic archive to create a programme to commemorate the end of WWII in both Europe and the Far East

From 8 May-15 August 2020, the Imperial War Museum is running its 'Victory 75' anniversary programme that retells the story of the end of WWII in a unique way for contemporary audiences. IWM has been marking the 75th anniversaries of VE Day, the dropping of the atomic bombs and VJ Day by bringing voices IWM's vast sound archive into homes around the world.

The programme began on 8 May 2020 with a four-minute soundscape called 'Voices of War' on IWM's website. This brings together diverse first-hand accounts of VE Day from a Jamaican RAF aircraftsman to a Jewish Berliner who survived Sachsenhausen concentration camp, and even Winston Churchill. 'Voices of War' is intended as a focal point that echoes how families heard how the war ended in both Europe and the Far East on the wireless. Following these extraordinary news announcements, people were encouraged to reflect on a time of both celebration and cautious relief in the summer of 1945. They also considered what victory really meant for people in factories, fields, hospitals and homes around the world.

As part of 'Voices of War', commissioned contemporary artistic responses to the end of the conflict have also been released on the IWM website and social media channels. These responses, ranging from spoken word performances to music and poetry, will question our understanding of what victory means and reinterpret these pivotal historical moments for contemporary audiences. This includes its resonance today in these challenging times as well as stories of people standing together during a time of national crisis. Current artists who have responded to the anniversaries include Daljit Nagra, inaugural poet-in-residence for BBC Radio 4 & 4 Extra, activist Amina Atiq, DJ and poet Charlie Dark, and playwright Chanje Kunda.

Diane Lees, director-general of IWM says, "Originally, we had planned to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of WWII in public spaces around the UK. Due to the current situation, this is no longer possible. However, the need to commemorate this national anniversary and to remember the sacrifices made on our behalf by past generations is as pressing as ever. With 'Voices of War', we want the public to reflect on this important historical milestone as many others did 75 years ago – in their privacy of their own homes – and be part of this important moment with IWM and the rest of the country."

Left: RAF ground crews of 356 Squadron celebrate upon hearing the news of Japan's surrender in the Cocos Islands

Top: Colonel Paul Tibbets pictured in front of his B-29 aircraft 'Enola Gay' that dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945

Above: Crowds dance in Oxford Circus, London on VJ Day, 15 August 1945

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
WWW.IWM.ORG.UK/VICTORY

THE SECRET ANNEX ONLINE

The internationally recognised Anne Frank House biographical museum provides virtual tours around the diarist's hiding place in Amsterdam

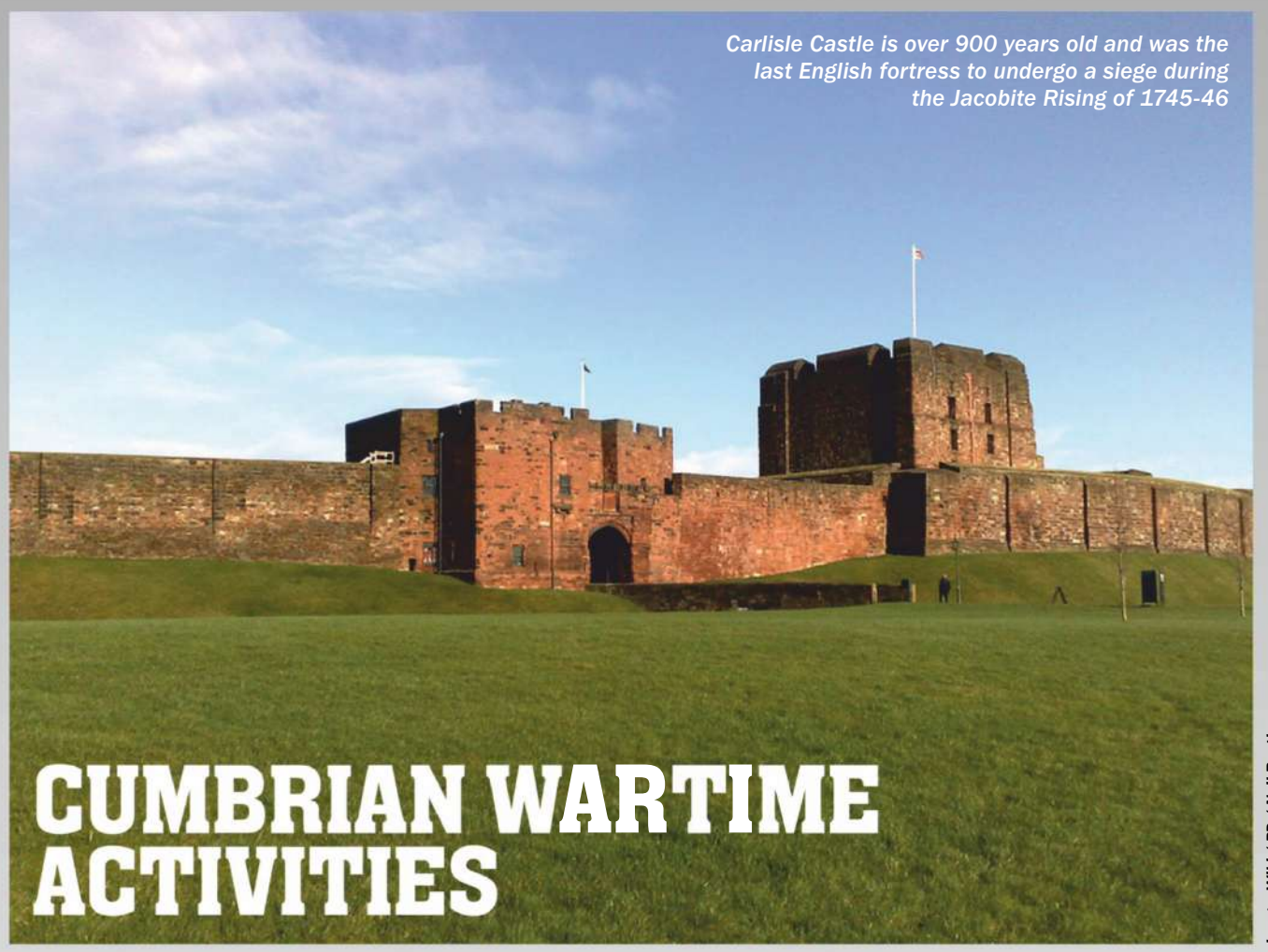
The third most visited museum in the Netherlands after the Rijksmuseum and Van Gogh Museum, Anne Frank House is dedicated to the famous WWII diarist. The 17th century building in central Amsterdam was the hiding place of the Frank family and four other people from Nazi persecution in hidden rooms known as the Achterhuis ('Secret Annex'). Anne did not survive the war but her father Otto helped to establish the current museum in 1957. Open since 1960, the museum preserves the Franks' hiding place and has a permanent exhibition about Anne's life story.

Dedicated to educating people about persecution and discrimination, Anne Frank House is an independent non-profit organisation. Its website has a dedicated page for international visitors who cannot currently visit the museum with an extensive range of options. The Secret Annex can be virtually toured online, including in virtual reality with the free 'Anne Frank House VR' app. The home that the Frank family lived in before they went into hiding can also be viewed in 360 degrees. In addition to the virtual tours, there is an 'Anne Frank' video diary that airs in 15 episodes on YouTube and her life story can also be viewed in 20 languages.

Anne Frank pictured in her school photograph in 1941

Image: Wiki / PD

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:
WWW.ANNEFRANK.ORG



Carlisle Castle is over 900 years old and was the last English fortress to undergo a siege during the Jacobite Rising of 1745-46

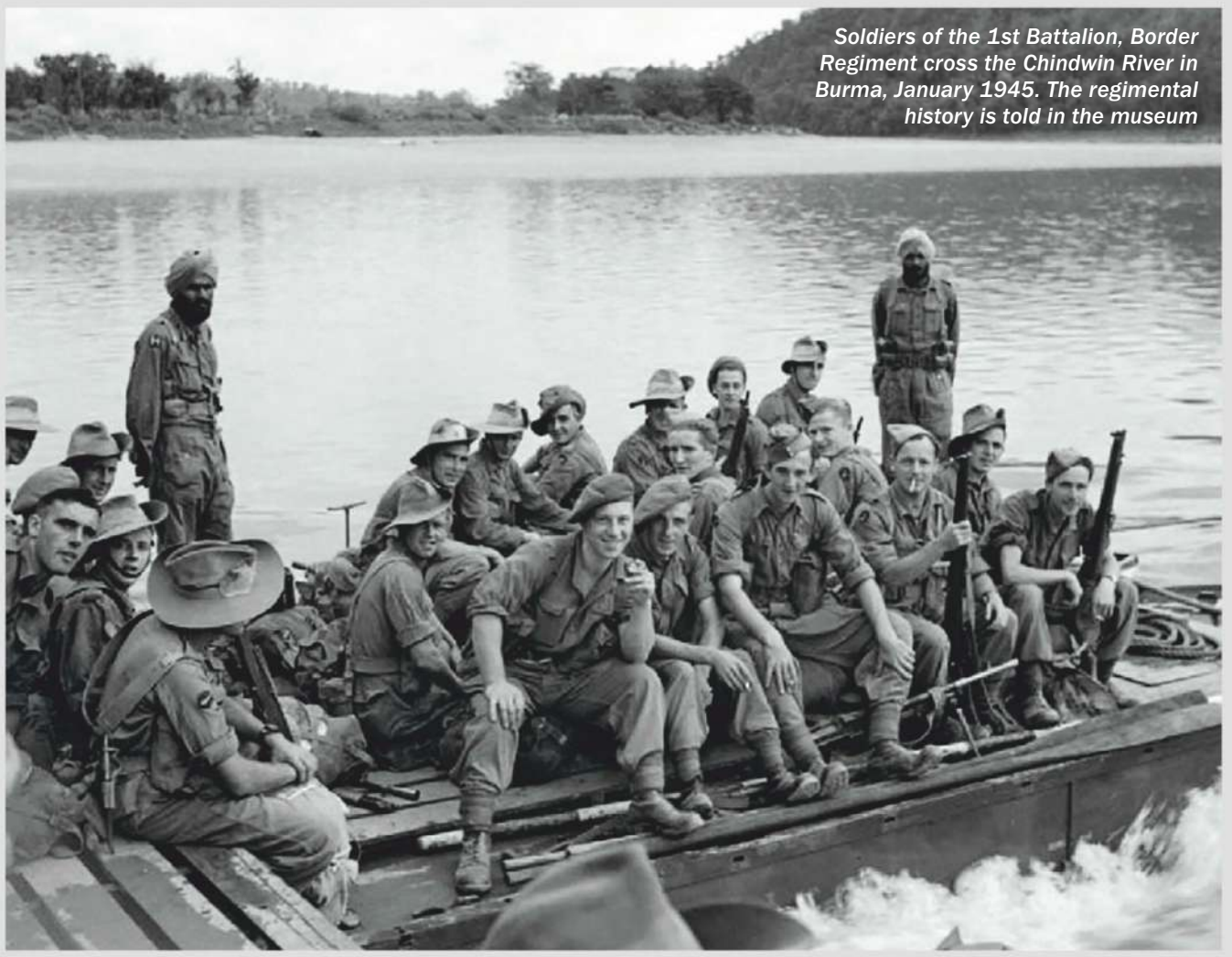
Image: Wiki / PD / Neil Boothman

CUMBRIAN WARTIME ACTIVITIES

Cumbria's Museum of Military Life has an active online presence that covers the history of northwest England's infantrymen

Located inside Carlisle Castle, the Cumbria's Museum of Military Life covers 300 years of Cumbria's regimental histories. This includes the 34th Regiment of Foot, 55th Regiment of Foot, Border Regiment, King's Own Royal Border Regiment and even the current regiment that serves the county, The Duke of Lancaster's. The museum aims to reinforce the strong links between Cumbria's regiments and the local community by sharing their remarkable stories of courage, loyalty and service. Its collections include many medals, weapons, uniforms, unique artefacts, military art and silver that date from 1702 to the present.

Although small, the museum has created several online options for visitors to participate in. This includes a virtual tour of the museum and slide shows. The latter include historic photographs of Cumbrian soldiers in colonial India, the Border Regiment at Gallipoli and vintage photos of Carlisle Castle itself. The museum also runs 'Virtual Wednesday Workshops' where families can take part in a variety of arts and crafts activities. Instructions, ideas and templates are provided to make wartime items like bunting, postcards, medals, camouflage, hardtack biscuits and even 'Make do and Mend' teddy bears and rudimentary 'field telephones'.



Soldiers of the 1st Battalion, Border Regiment cross the Chindwin River in Burma, January 1945. The regimental history is told in the museum

Image: Wiki / PD

Q&A WITH: JULIE SUMMERS

JULIE SUMMERS, AUTHOR OF *DRESSED FOR WAR*, DISCUSSES HOW THE PEOPLE OF BRITAIN ANTICIPATED THE END OF THE WAR IN EUROPE

What were the final few months of World War II like for civilians in Britain?

The last few months of the war for British civilians were exhausting. For the previous nine months the Germans had been launching V1 and V2 rockets on London and the southeast with lethal effect. Elsewhere, rationing and shortages added to people's woes and there was a sense of war-fatigue on the one hand and a growing awareness of the horrors that had been perpetrated in Nazi-occupied Europe. The author Barbara Cartland wrote, "We were glad, but still our hearts refused to sing, the shadow of war still lay over us in a restriction of freedom, in controls and coupons."

How prepared were people for victory? Was it well known it was close at hand?

People were prepared for the end of the war and were relieved when it came. They had been told by the politicians and the press that Nazi rule was coming to an end. But there was not the same euphoria there had been at the end of World War I. When VE Day came in May 1945 it marked the end of the European conflict, but the war in the Far East was to last for another three months.

How did people prepare for VE Day?

Some people laid on street parties for children while others celebrated in town centres. London was busy, with the streets of the capital packed with ex-servicemen, foreign servicemen and women, and young people out to mark the end of the war. Formal celebrations were muted because the country was still at war with Japan.

© Getty

Source: Wiki / PD Gov / IWM

Source: Wiki / PD Gov / IWM

Source: Wiki / PD Gov / IWM

DRESSED FOR WAR BY JULIE SUMMERS IS PUBLISHED BY SIMON & SCHUSTER
PRICED £20 (HARDBACK EDITION), IT'S AVAILABLE TO BUY NOW FROM ALL GOOD BOOK STOCKISTS

What were the expectations for people after VE Day?
As after World War I, people wanted and expected life in Britain to get back to normal. Where there had been harmony of purpose during the war years now discontent broke out when people realised that it would be several years until things would return to what they thought of as normal. Rationing was still very much in place and in some cases it got worse – bread was rationed for the first time, for example. And demobilisation led to further clothing shortages, which in turn led to even more resentment.

"WE WERE GLAD, BUT STILL OUR HEARTS REFUSED TO SING"

***Above, left:** A staged photo of a milkman displaying the 'Blitz spirit', carrying on his round in the rubble*

***Above, top:** The Women's Land Army continued to operate until it was disbanded in October 1949. The Women's Timber Corp broke up in 1946*

***Above:** Women continued to serve in the auxiliary armed forces for some years*

***Above, right:** Food rationing didn't fully come to an end in Britain until 1954*

When did British families begin to get reunited after evacuation and being enlisted?
Demobilisation took more than 18 months and evacuees returned not en masse but piecemeal. Some servicemen were fast-tracked out of the armed forces, especially if they had experience of trades that were badly needed, such as builders, roofers and electricians. That naturally caused resentment, as it'd done after World War I. Evacuees made their way home to families who'd often changed, grown up or moved. A number of children found they had no home to go to nor parents to return to.

What would the expectations have been for women who found their agency during the war?
This interesting question depends on whose perspective you view it from. Women who had found their agency during the war were expected to return to their homes and make way for the men who would need their jobs. For the government that was the ideal situation, so too for the returning men. For the women it was often a bitter disappointment and many found it almost impossible to settle down after the war. Audrey Withers, the subject of my latest book, was scathing about the government's ability to develop instant amnesia about the role women had played in the war. She never let up in her fight to ensure women were treated as equals to men.

WWII THIS MONTH...

JULY 1940

To commemorate 80 years since the Second World War, **History of War** will be taking a look at some of the key events taking place each month of the conflict

A SORROWFUL REPORT

Churchill is pictured (inset) departing 10 Downing Street on his way to inform Parliament of the attacks on the French fleet the previous day, as part of Operation Catapult. Addressing Parliament, he declared, “It is with sincere sorrow that I must now announce to the House the measures which we have felt bound to take in order to prevent the French Fleet from falling into German hands.” The Prime Minister recounted how French ships in the harbour of Mers-el-Kébir, in French Algeria, were entreated to surrender to the Royal Navy, but were subsequently attacked and sunk. This move was condemned by the French government in Bordeaux as well as the Vichy regime. The British attack claimed the lives of 1,297 French sailors, but the removal of the French fleet kept the precarious balance of naval power in the Mediterranean.

French ships burn in the aftermath of the British attack at Mers-el-Kébir on 3 July

© Getty

RETURN OF THE CONQUEROR

Hitler is greeted by crowds outside the Kroll Opera building, shortly after his return to Germany from recently occupied France. In his speech on 19 July, Hitler addressed Churchill, claiming he should "place trust in me when as a prophet I now proclaim: A great world empire will be destroyed" referring to the British Empire.

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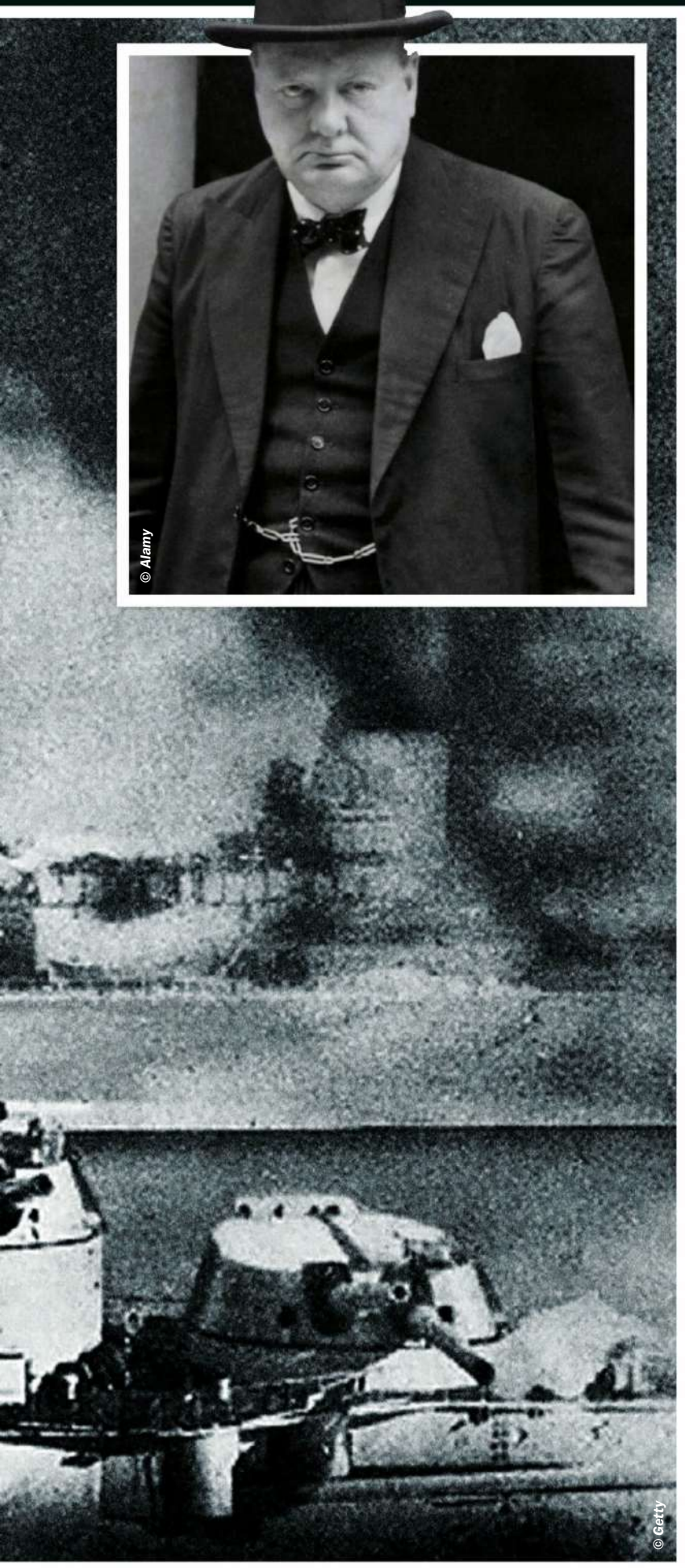
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HURRICANE HERO

A portrait of Flying Officer Rupert F. Smythe, No.32 Squadron, at RAF Hawkinge, Kent. During the same month, Smyth engaged and broke up six Messerschmitt 109s, downing one, for which he received the Distinguished Flying Cross. The following month he was wounded when his Hurricane was shot down in action over Kent. Though historians continue to debate the official beginning of the Battle of Britain, by July the Luftwaffe and Fighter Command were engaged in a constant struggle for air superiority over southern England.

© Getty

REVIEWS

Our pick of the latest military history books

THE HUMAN FACTOR

A NEW HISTORY OF THE END OF THE COLD WAR, FOCUSSING ON THE INFLUENCE AND PERSONALITIES OF THREE OF THE KEY PLAYERS

Author: Archie Brown **Publisher:** Oxford University Press **Price:** £25.00

Archie Brown's *The Human Factor* is yet another book on the end of the Cold War. However, instead of perpetuating the view that the Soviet Union was on the brink of economic collapse, Brown reassess the situation and focuses instead on the role of the key players on the international stage. Looking at the relationship between British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, American President Ronald Reagan and in particular Soviet Leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Brown draws on interviews and conversations to present a fascinating new viewpoint.

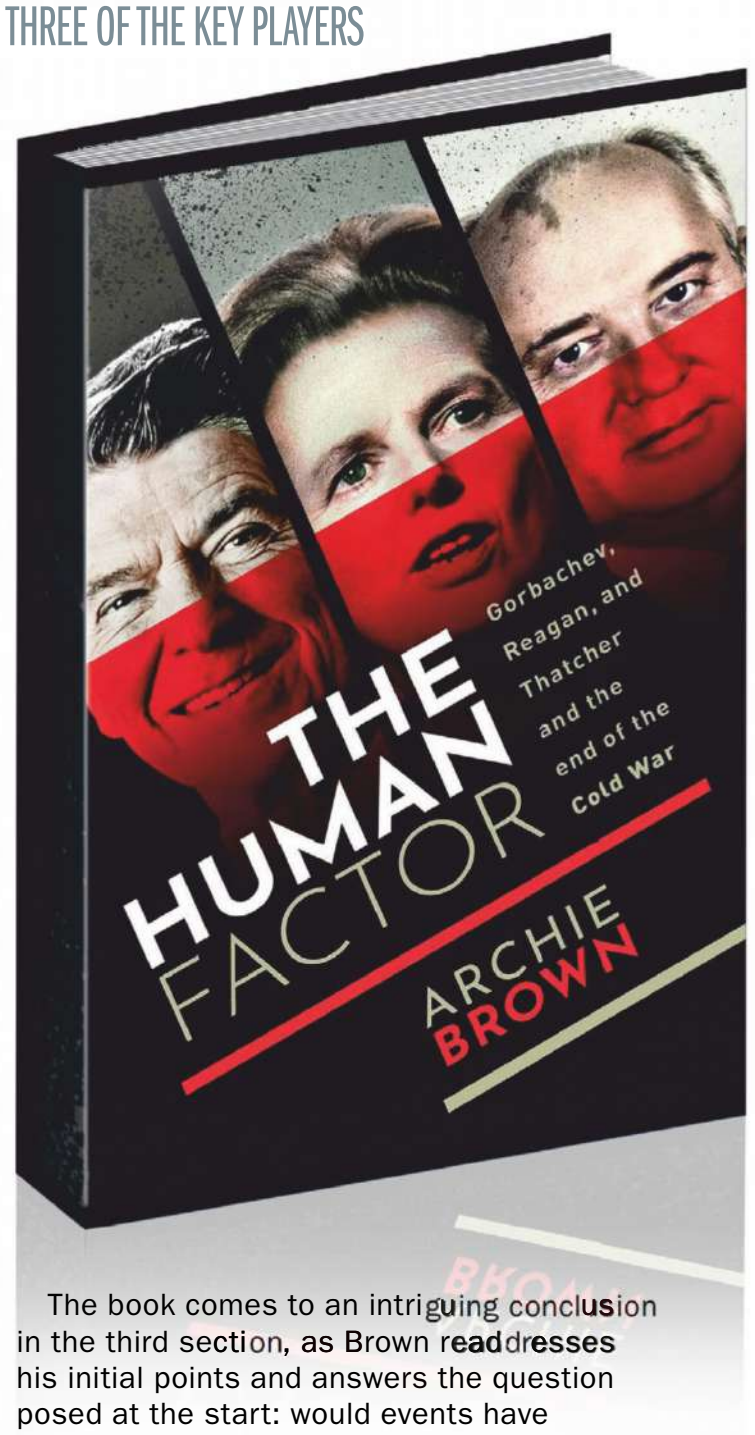
The book is sectioned into three parts, with part one serving as an extended 'introduction', part two presenting Brown's main focus and arguments, and part three serving as both a conclusion and epilogue. As such, part one is best described as a 'potted history' of the Cold War and provides biographies of the three key players and their political careers, both domestically and internationally, up until this point. However, it must be stated that this opening section feels far too long. The material outlining the previous careers of Thatcher, Reagen and Gorbachev feels relevant and detailed, littered with the sections of the interviews and conversations which are a selling point of the book. However, the first chapter, which functions primarily as a 'Previously in the Cold War!' really does take its time and leaves the reader yearning for Brown to get to the point. However I must urge prospective readers to press on, for when the book gets going it delivers its promise in spades.

Where *The Human Factor* explores its central premise, of revealing the role of the three leaders' personalities and relationship in ending the war, is where it proves the most fascinating. Brown uses the aforementioned interviews, conversations and comments (gathered from a range of sources) to chart the changing opinions of the trio on not only elements of foreign and domestic policy, but also toward each other. He explores all the usual avenues (for example the role of The Strategic Defence initiative, or 'Star Wars') but charts how these changed or affected personal views and opinions.

"WOULD EVENTS HAVE OCCURRED DIFFERENTLY HAD A DIFFERENT SET OF LEADERS BEEN IN CHARGE?"

Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev sign the INF Treaty

Source: Wiki / PD



The book comes to an intriguing conclusion in the third section, as Brown readdresses his initial points and answers the question posed at the start: would events have occurred differently had a different set of leaders been in charge? It's a thought provoking point to discuss, especially as Brown takes the time to outline realistic alternatives, who potentially could have been leaders instead.

Even for those who are already deeply aware of the events leading up to the end of the Cold War, *The Human Factor* is a fascinating read. It may not necessarily provide you with information you didn't already know, though the depth and breadth of the book may yield interesting tidbits of information. What *The Human Factor* does do and does so well, is provide a fascinating new perspective on already well-tread ground. **CM**

ACROSS AN ANGRY SEA

IN MAY 1982, BRITISH TROOPS WENT INTO BATTLE IN THE SOUTH ATLANTIC WITH THE ODDS STACKED AGAINST THEM. THIS IS THE STORY OF THE WAR AS EXPERIENCED BY D SQUADRON, 22 SAS

Author: Sir Cedric Delves **Publisher:** Hurst **Price:** £12.99

When the UK went to war with Argentina over the junta's seizure of the Falkland Islands, all the signs pointed to a sound defeat for British forces. The war was to be conducted in the South Atlantic, in freezing in mid-winter temperatures. There were also serious concerns about the US administration providing support for the venture. "Weather, distance, the local balance of forces, all these suggested Argentina would win," says Lieutenant General Sir Cedric Delves in his authoritative account of the conflict.

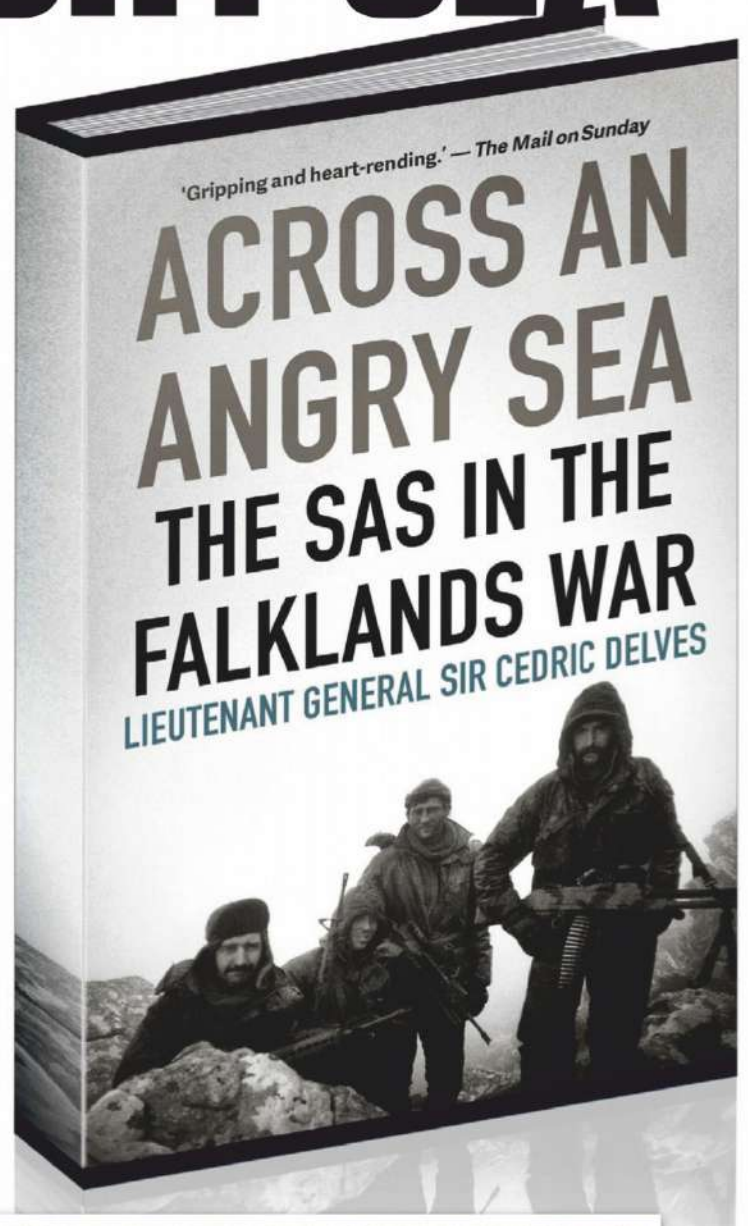
Delves had been in command of D Squadron 22 SAS since the start of 1982. There was nothing to suggest that within a few months his men would be waging war at the gateway to the Antarctic. Yet in April, D and G Squadron found themselves steaming south to recapture the British dependencies.

The author explains that early on in the conflict, the initial concerns were reversed when they perceived serious defects in the enemy forces. In spite of operating close to home, with a capable navy and modern air force, their arrangements were crude and tactically ineffective, suggesting low levels of military education and training.

Delves take the reader step-by-step though D Squadron's campaigns up to the Argentine capitulation on 14 June, starting with South Georgia in late April, followed by the operations in Mount Kent, attacks on the Argentine airstrip on Pebble Island and then finally on to Port Stanley Harbour.

One of the most poignant events depicted in the book is unrelated to battle actions. This was the burial of Delves's SAS comrade-in-arms, John Hamilton, killed on West Falkland a few days before the Argentine surrender. The author says it was decided not to fire a volley in salute "so as not to disturb John's peace. We were done with all that, for now, until perhaps called upon again. We remembered. Then we left". **JS**

"WEATHER, DISTANCE, THE LOCAL BALANCE OF FORCES, ALL THESE SUGGESTED ARGENTINA WOULD WIN"



An Argentine soldier gives the 'thumbs up' in April 1982

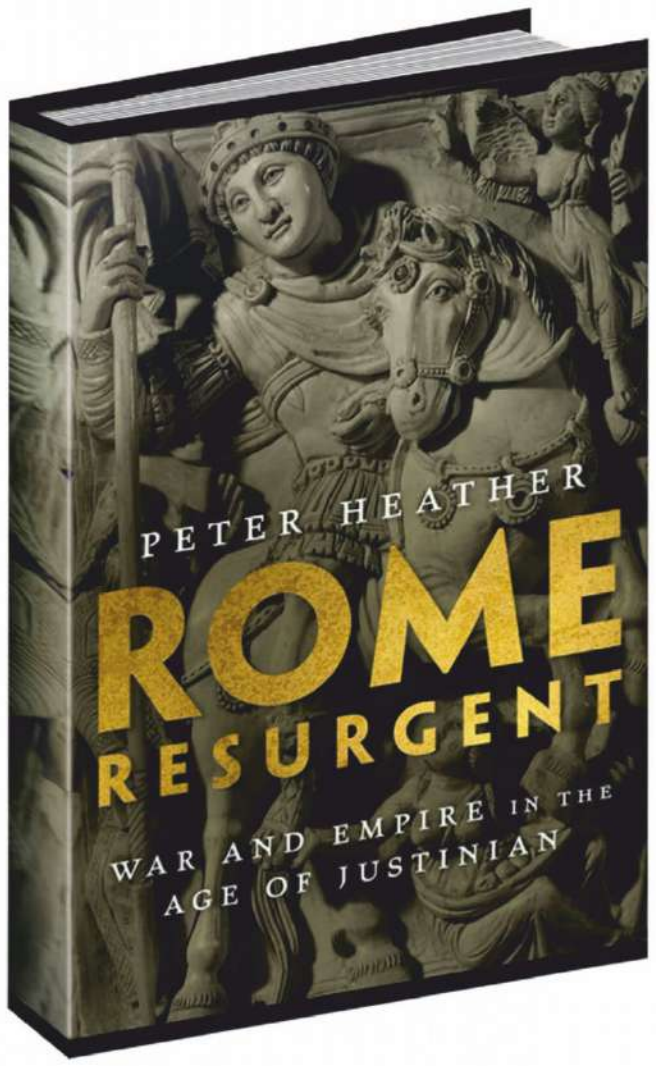
Source: Wiki / PD

ROME RESURGENT

WAR AND EMPIRE IN THE AGE OF JUSTINIAN

A COMPREHENSIVE RE-ASSESSMENT OF JUSTINIAN'S REIGN

Writer: Peter Heather **Publisher:** Oxford University Press **Price:** £12.99



Justinian I – also known as Justinian the Great – is perhaps the most famous of all the Byzantine Emperors. In his latest book, historian Peter Heather reconsiders the reign and legacy of Justinian, his quest to recover the lands of the fallen Western Roman Empire and whether his conquests ultimately led to the fall of the Eastern Empire.

As Heather explores the political and military history of Justinian's reign, he disputes two key arguments that have been frequently put forward by other historians. Firstly, he believes that the wars of Justinian were not driven by his desire to reunify the Roman Empire but rather to expand his territory, just like the other rulers of his time. Secondly, he determines that the Eastern Empire became vulnerable to Persian and Arab invaders in the 7th century because of outside influences, not because Justinian had over-expanded his empire and depleted its resources.

By reassessing Justinian and his achievements alongside the wider context of the period in which he lived, Heather offers a deeper understanding of his reign and his arguments are convincing – for readers who already know this period of history well, this book will definitely be thought-provoking.

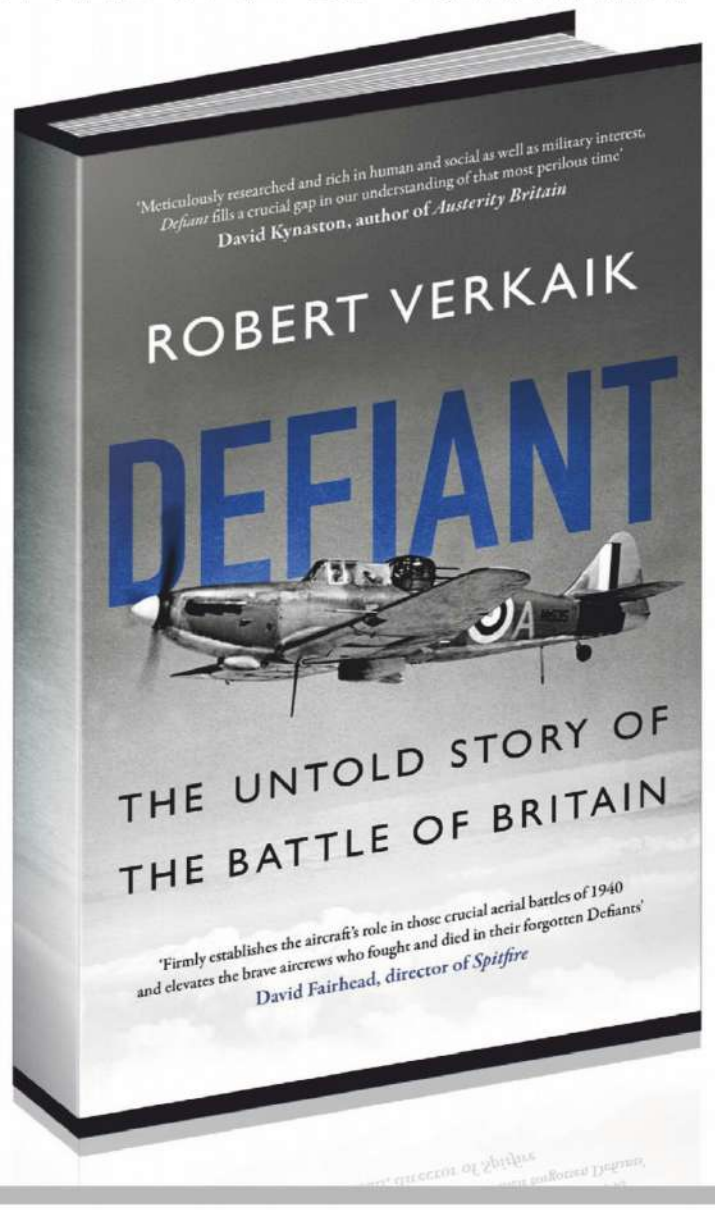
Heather supports his arguments with a plethora of textual and archaeological sources and he also includes an extensive bibliography. At the same time, he has managed to produce a well-written narrative that is engaging and easy to read, making this book accessible to anybody with an interest in Justinian, not just academics. **JL**

DEFIANT

THE UNTOLD STORY OF THE BATTLE OF BRITAIN

AN ATTEMPT TO GAIN JUSTICE FOR A 'FORGOTTEN FIGHTER'

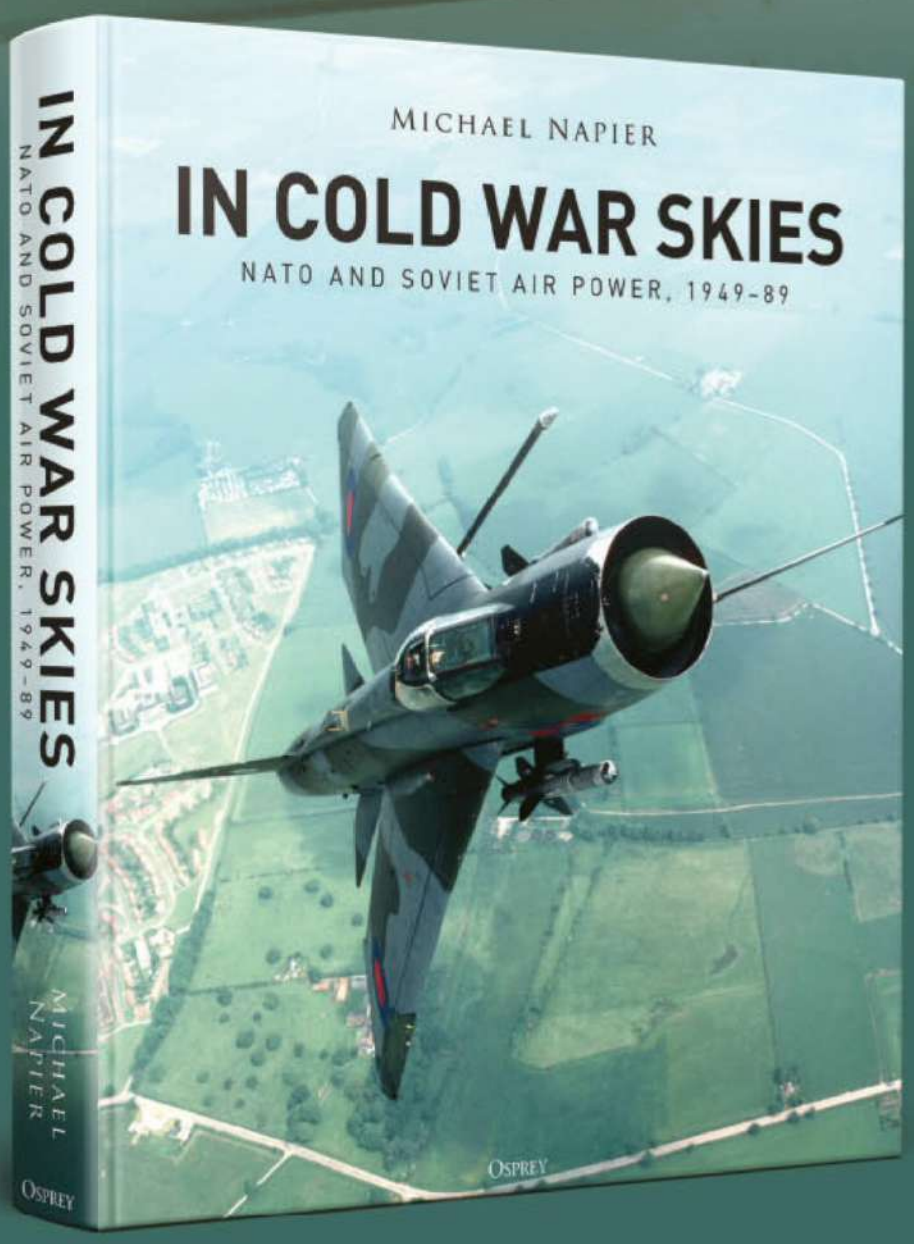
Author: Robert Verkaik **Publisher:** Robinson **Price:** £20.00



The Boulton Paul Defiant is arguably a forgotten fighter. Plagued by production and technical problems, it was only available in very small numbers in 1940. In May 1940 it proved an effective day fighter over France, scoring several notable victories. However, the changed tactical circumstances of the Battle of Britain meant the type suffered heavy casualties until it was withdrawn from day operations in late August and switched to night fighting.

The Defiant deserves a fresh re-evaluation, but regrettably this book does not provide it. Numerous factual errors with dates, individuals and aircraft technicalities are spread across a background that shows an imperfect understanding of the workings of the RAF and the Air Ministry. The book contains some fascinating recollections from the aircrew and interesting accounts of their operations, but little information on the aircraft itself. Instead it focuses on an alleged high level conspiracy at HQ Fighter Command and the Air Ministry to keep numbers low and deny the Defiant a chance to prove itself. The argument is inconsistent and contradictory, and largely ignores the practical point that losses outstripped production. The author maintains that superiors consistently denied Defiants the fighter escorts which they needed to be effective. This not only ignores the tactical realities of the Battle of Britain, but also the fact that during their final action on 24 August 1940 the Defiants suffered 33 per cent casualties despite having an escort of Hawker Hurricanes. Very little is said about its later success as a night fighter, or in other roles. The Defiant deserves better. **SH**

"THE DEFIANTS SUFFERED 33 PER CENT CASUALTIES DESPITE HAVING AN ESCORT OF HAWKER HURRICANES"



MICHAEL NAPIER

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NATO AND SOVIET AIR POWER, 1949–89

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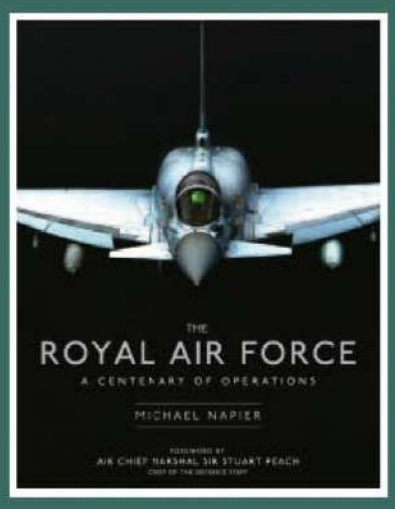

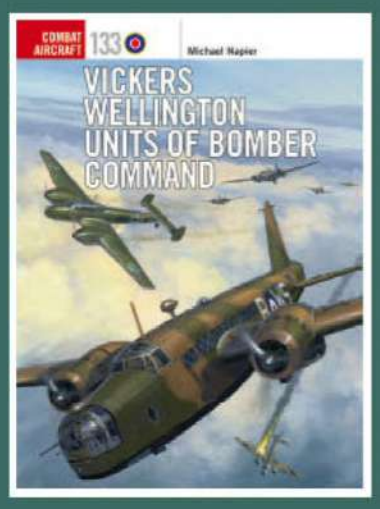

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RAF DUNKIRK JACKET

This battered item of clothing was worn by a Hurricane pilot shot down during Operation Dynamo in May 1940

***Inset, left:** Pilot Officer Ronald N. H. Courtney standing in front of a Hawker Hurricane at RAF North Weald in August 1940 during the Battle of Britain*

On 29 May 1940, Pilot Officer Ronald N. H. Courtney was forced to bail out of his Hawker Hurricane over the English Channel after being shot down by German Messerschmitt Bf 109s. Courtney had been conducting a rescue mission during Operation Dynamo, the desperate but remarkable evacuation of 338,000 Allied soldiers from the beaches of Dunkirk.

A stunning feat of military planning, Dynamo very likely saved Britain from total defeat and ironically boosted public morale. Nevertheless, for those who experienced it, Dunkirk was nightmarish and individual escapes often depended on luck. Courtney was fortunate to be picked up from the water by a Royal Navy corvette, HMS Shearwater. He survived to later become a group captain.

This pictured RAF Service Dress jacket was worn by Courtney when he was shot down and still contains shrapnel holes that were sustained during the incident. This item forms part of a collection of Courtney's belongings that have been acquired by the Imperial War Museum. Other artefacts include his flying logbook and his Distinguished Flying Cross and Bar medal.

John Delaney, Head of Second World War and Mid-20th Century Conflict at the IWM says, "It is a rarity to acquire a battle-damaged uniform and be able to say where and when it was worn and link it to such an important event. At the time, the Royal Navy's contribution at Dunkirk eclipsed the role of the RAF, who many considered to have provided insufficient protection to the stranded troops. Today, we are much more aware of the challenges the RAF faced and the vital part they played in the rescue mission."

Courtney was wounded in the back of the neck and the right leg on 29 May 1940. Evidence for his neck wound can be seen in the shrapnel damage the jacket sustained below the collar line

Group Captain Courtney's Dunkirk jacket is part of the IWM's collection. This huge archive can be viewed online along with hundreds of articles and podcasts.

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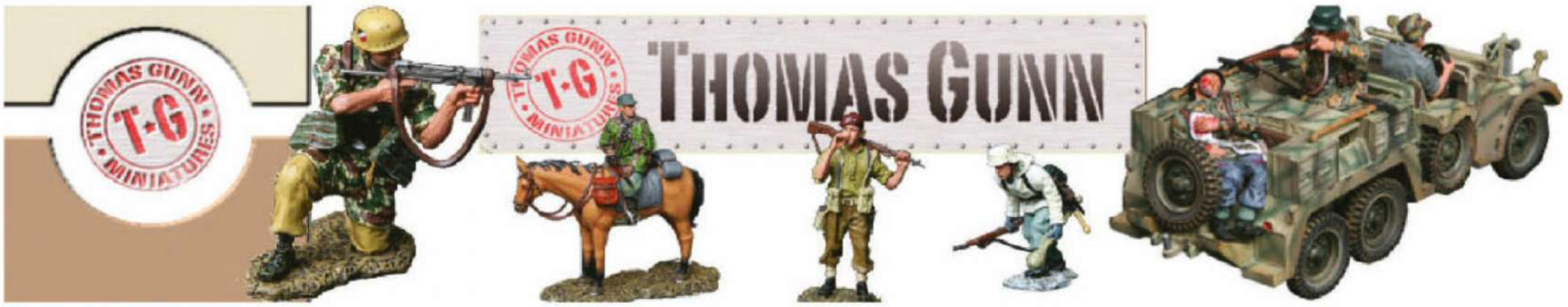

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